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BAPU'S LETTERS TO MIRA

[1924-1948]

NAVAJIVAN PUBLISHING HOUSE
AHMEDABAD

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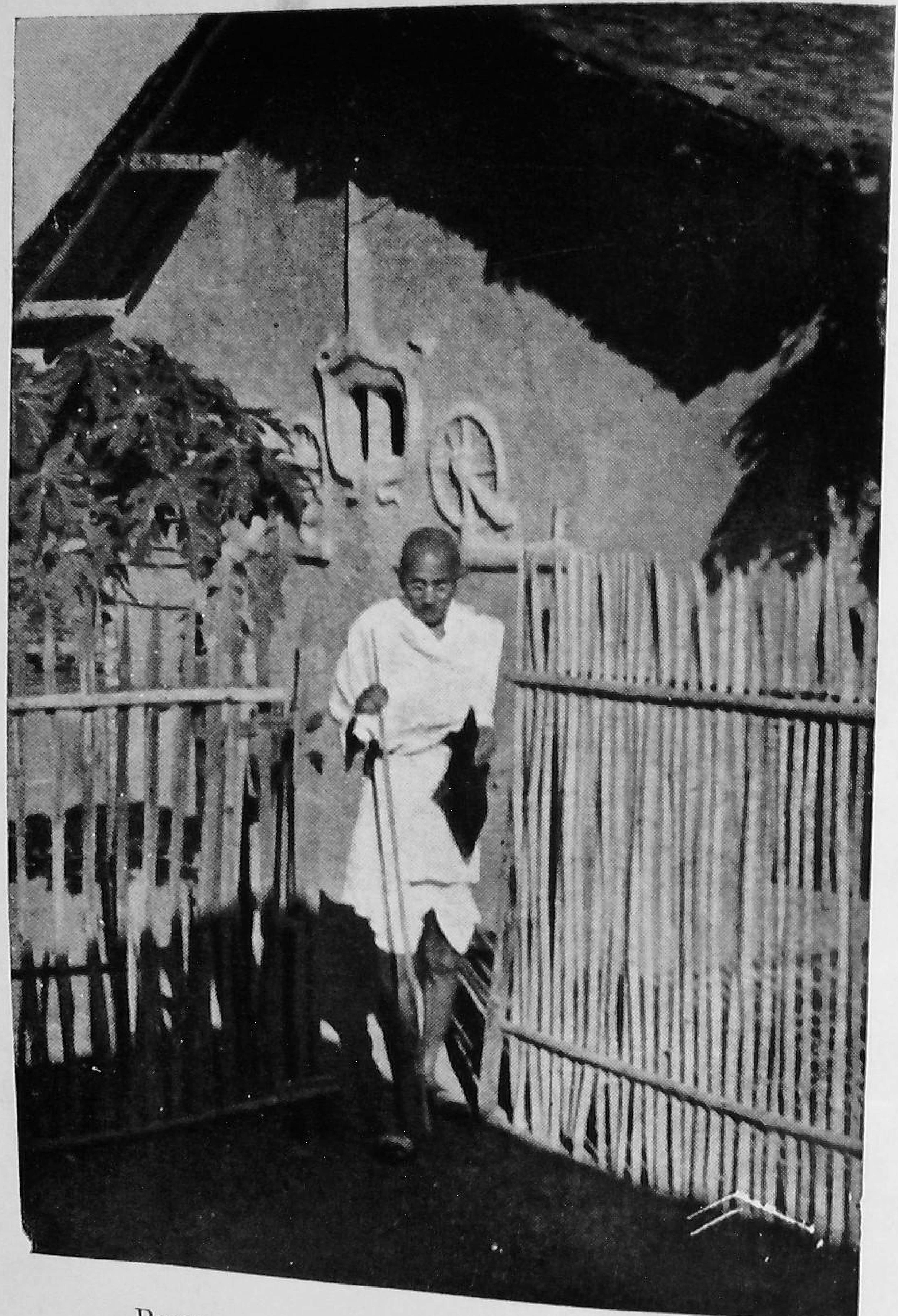
ஊ. வி. ப. நிலையம்.
ச.வி நகரம்
நூல் நிலையம்
பிரிவு................ ....
புத்தக எண் ....



Bapu coming out of his Sevagram cottage

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PREFACE

When I take up my pen to try and write a preface to these letters, my head bows in reverence and my heart overflows at the thought of Bapu's infinite love. How can I express myself in words ? For many weeks I have remained in this state of mind, but today, November 7th 1948, I have determined not to put down my pen. This day, 23 years ago at 7-45 a.m. I reached Sabarmati, and came into Bapu's blessed presence. This day, one year ago, I came to Bapu as usual for my " birthday " blessings at that hour.

" It is twenty-two years today," I said, kneeling at his side.

" Twenty-two years is no small matter," Bapu quietly replied, placing his hand on my head.

Today that gentle hand can no longer be felt in the flesh. But the spirit is there and I have sought Bapu in God and found his birthday blessings.

Bapu always told us that we must not look upon him as a *Guru*, that no man in these days is worthy of that status, and that God alone is the one real *Guru*.

" Make Him your *Guru* and He will never fail you."

And yet, Bapu was a *Guru* of *gurus*, in that he taught one to find God and to depend on Him alone. That is the central teaching which runs through the whole of these letters.

Here there is no question of literary style or philosophical flights. It is the most simple, direct and intimate teaching of a Spiritual Father to his stumbling child. What patience and what love are revealed ! May God help me to become worthy of that love, is my continual prayer.

The last twenty-two years of Bapu's life are reflected in these letters. Not the grand and dramatic outer life seen by all, but the inner personal life which ran its balanced, even course of spiritual search, undeterred by all the turmoils of the outer world. I have purposely not omitted many apparently simple matters, and even repetitions, because of the light that they throw on Bapu's character ; the importance he attached to the so-called little things in life, and the tenacity and energy with which he pursued, what would be called by lesser people, small matters. There was nothing too small for Bapu's meticulous attention, and no one too lowly for his loving care. At the same time his relentless search for Truth made any waste of time or sentimental weakness impossible.

These letters are a selection of 386 out of 650 which I collected and treasured year by year. In the days of arrests and imprisonments, with their accompanying searches and destruction of papers, my only anxiety was for Bapu's letters. Whenever I saw the likelihood of arrest approaching, I would leave them with some 'unsuspected' friend, or in some institute where no searches would be likely to be made. Then, for the last three years, I have kept them with me in a little tin trunk. Mercifully they have survived all vicissitudes and now, when they are at last published, I shall feel an immense sense of relief. The treasure of spiritual thought and guidance which they contain, though addressed only to one, must be available to all.

Background

In order that the reader may have a clearer background, I will explain briefly the outline of events in my life which led me to Bapu. Having been brought up in an English country home, I was familiar with rural life, besides which there was, inherent in me from the beginning, a profound love of Nature. At the age of 15, I first heard the music of Beethoven. Forthwith my spirit within was awakened to a living sense of the Divine Power, and prayer to God became a reality. Through Beethoven's music I became led to Romain Rolland, and through Romain Rolland to Bapu. These were not just easy stages. On the contrary turmoil, darkness, hope, despair—all had to be passed through before the pure Light of Truth broke in upon my troubled soul and led me to my destination.

All along a power was impelling me. I did not understand it for a long while, but, by the time I came to know of Romain Rolland, this force was becoming apparent to me, and from the time of our first meetings at Villeneuve, an extraordinary sense of mellow happiness possessed me. I felt something was coming. I had not the slightest idea *what*. I only knew that *all would be well*. Even when Romain Rolland talked to me about Bapu, and said a little book he had written about him was in the Press, I did not realize more than that I must read the book. Then the day came when the book was published. I went to the publisher's shop in the Latin Quarter of Paris, where I was then staying. The whole shop-window was full of a little book with an orange coloured cover on which was printed in black ' Mahatma Gandhi '. I bought a copy, took it to my lodging and began to read. I could not put it down. I read and read, and as I read the dawn in my heart glowed brighter and brighter, and by the time I had finished, the Sun of Truth was pouring his rays into my soul. From that

moment I knew that my life was dedicated to Bapu. That for which I had been waiting had come, and it was this.

I straightaway went to London and booked a passage to India at the P. & O. office. I also sought out and devoured all the literature I could; writings of Bapu, writings of Tagore, English and French translations of the *Bhagawad-gita*; and even the *Upanishads* and *Vedas* I peeped into. But very soon I began to realize that I was a fool to think that I could rush to Bapu like this. I was wholly unfit spiritually and physically, and I must first put myself through a severe training. I accordingly went back to the P. & O. office and changed my reserved berth for one a year later.

I now set about things in a thorough and systematic way. First I studied the rules and regulations of the Sabarmati Ashram in every detail. Then I began changing my diet item by item, until I reached pure vegetarian food. I started sitting cross-legged on the floor. Ten minutes at a stretch was all I could do in the beginning, but with steady practice I became perfectly at ease. I commenced lessons in Urdu and of course learnt carding, spinning and weaving. This had to be in wool, but gave me good practice. At the same time study of the literature continued. In the midst of this training news came in the papers that Bapu had gone on a 21 days' fast for Hindu-Muslim unity. As the days went by, the papers began saying that Bapu would probably not survive. I prayed to God in anguish. The days dragged on. But I never slackened in my training because, even if Bapu were to pass away in his physical form, I knew I must go to India to serve his cause. It seemed an eternity, but at last the 21 days were over and the news came that the fast had been safely broken.

Up to now I had not written a word to Bapu. But on the successful completion of the fast, my heart was so full of thankful joy that I just had to write. As a thank-offering,

I enclosed in the envelope a cheque for £ 20. The postcard with which this book opens is Bapu's acknowledgment of that letter.

During the summer months I spent my time working with Swiss peasants in their hayfields so as to be in good trim for any physical work which might be in store for me in India. When my year's training was about three quarters over, I wrote again to Bapu reporting my progress, enclosing some samples of my yarn and asking whether I might dare to hope that I should be accepted in the Ashram. The letter which follows the first postcard is Bapu's reply. From then on my joy knew no bounds, and I lived in a state of inner ecstasy.

It might have been expected that my parents would try to dissuade me from departing, especially as my Father was closely connected with high British officials being an Admiral, and former Commander-in-Chief of the East Indies Squadron, and as my Mother and I were deeply attached to one another by a fundamental similitude of nature. But somehow they understood the spiritual character of the urge that impelled me and never said a word to me in disapproval.

In the autumn, I paid a last visit to Villeneuve to bid farewell to Romain Rolland and his sister. Then I went back to London, packed up a few belongings and set forth. I parted with my Mother at Victoria Station and with my Father in Paris, and fate so willed it that I never saw them again.

On 25th October 1925, I boarded the P. & O. steamer at Marseilles. The voyage was one long dream of spiritual ecstasy, and the moon, as she rose night after night in the East, shed her light on the waters in a glorious silver path leading on and on towards the blessed goal.

After 12 days I landed in Bombay, and in the early morning of November 7 I reached Ahmedabad by train. Friendly faces at the station looked through the carriage window, and before I knew what had happened, I was out of the train and being seated in a car by someone who introduced himself as Vallabhbhai Patel. Another, who said he was Mahadev Desai, returned to see to the luggage. The car drove off. I looked at my companion and asked but one question — How far was the Ashram and how soon should we get there ? From that day to this, everytime I see the Sardar I think of those moments of supreme suspense. We crossed the bridge over the Sabarmati river and I again asked the question. Then came fields with some houses in the distance, and I once more enquired. I was quietly told that we were still a little way off. I sat transfixed with anticipation. Suddenly my companion remarked, "You see those trees and some buildings beyond ? That is the Ashram." In a moment the car drew up under a big tamarind tree, and I found myself walking down a little paved garden path. We passed through a small gate, then up two steps to a verandah and through a door into a room. As I entered, I became conscious of a small spare figure rising up from a white *gaddi* and stepping towards me. I knew it was Bapu, but, so completely overcome was I with reverence and joy, that I could see and feel nothing but a heavenly light. I fell on my knees at Bapu's feet. He lifted me up and taking me in his arms said, "You shall be my daughter." And so has it been from that day.

I had reached my destination ; the destination from which I was to begin. The old life was finished as if it belonged to a past birth, and I began life anew. And from now the real struggle began. In the old life I had groped my way through mist and fog, led by an inner urge which I could not explain. But now I emerged into the bright sunlight, and the steep, narrow Path of Truth showed clear

before me leading up and up ; so beautiful, and yet so hard to climb !

With boundless joy and energy, I started on the pilgrimage. Numberless times have I slipped and stumbled. Many have been the bruises and cuts. Bitter have been the tears with which I have watered the path, and once or twice the clouds have come down on the mountain and I have all but lost my way. But Bapu's love has at last led me out upon the upper pastures, where God's peace fills the sweet mountain air.

Mira

Ashram, Pashulok,
Rishikesh.

Postcard

1

[For the events leading up to this and the next letter see Preface pages 4-5]

Dear Friend,

I must apologize to you for not writing to you earlier. I have been continuously travelling. I thank you for £ 20 sent by you. The amount will be used for popularizing the spinning wheel.

I am glad indeed that instead of obeying your first impulse you decided to fit yourself for the life here and to take time. If a year's test still impels you to come, you will probably be right in coming to India.

On the train,
31-12-'24

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

Miss Madeleine Slade,
63, Bedford Gardens,
Campden Hill,
London, W. 8.

Dictated

148, Russa Road,
Calcutta,
24th July 1925

Dear Friend,

I was pleased to receive your letter which has touched me deeply. The samples of wool you have sent are excellent.

You are welcome whenever you choose to come. If I have advice of the steamer that brings you, there will be someone receiving you at the steamer, and guiding you to the train that will take you to Sabarmati. Only please remember that the life at the Ashram is not all rosy. It is strenuous. Bodily labour is given by every inmate. The climate of this country is also not a small consideration. I mention these things not to frighten you but merely to warn you.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

As my right hand requires rest, I am dictating my correspondence.

. . . .

Miss Madeleine Slade,
63, Bedford Gardens,
Campden Hill,
London, W. 8.
England.

3

[Bapu had gone out of the Ashram for three days, and I spent my spare time in preparing him a Hindustani letter, which I wrote out in both Devanagari and Urdu scripts. This was my first separation from Bapu after reaching the Ashram, and it caused me terrible pain.

The warm clothes were needed for the coming visit to the Kanpur Congress. I had got rid of all my woolen clothes on board the ship, as they were of mill cloth, and had landed in Khadi clothes which I had prepared in London out of Khadi ordered from Delhi in advance.]

My dear Mira,*

I have your loving present. Shankarlal Banker had prepared me for it. He told me you had surprises in store for me. I understood. Both Urdu and Hindi hand is good, certainly better than mine. And that is as it should be. You will not squander the inheritance you have claimed as yours but you will add to it a thousandfold.

You have been constantly in my thoughts. This three days' separation is good discipline. You have made the best use of it.

Devdas tells me you have now completely regained your voice.

You will tell me all about your warm clothing to-morrow.

May God bless you and keep you from harm.

With love,

4-12-'25

Bapu

---

* The Indian name which Bapu gave me shortly after my arrival.

[Again there had come a separation, and Bapu, realizing my pain, put before me that highest truth, which, only after years and years have I been able to realize. Everytime I was separated from Bapu I used to suffer excruciatingly, and if the separation was long my health used finally to break down.

Bapu was at this time writing his *Experiments with Truth* (Autobiography), and it was being published chapter by chapter each week in *Young India*. Bapu wrote it in Gujarati, Mahadev translated it into English and I used to go through it for corrections.]

चि.* मीरां,

I wrote a p. c. today in time for the post. This I am writing to post at Bombay for which I am leaving presently.

Your Hindi letter is very well written. Not हस्पताल से छोड़ेगा but छुटेगा. छोड़ेगा is transitive and so you drop the case ending से but keep it before छुटेगा which is intransitive.

I knew you were feeling the separation. You will get over it because it has got to be got over. The few days' separation is a preparation for the longer that death brings. In fact the separation is only superficial. Death brings us nearer. Is not the body a bar — if it is also an introduction ?

... ...

With love,

Deolali,
15-5-'26

Yours,
बापु

The chapter of *Autobiography* will be posted at the same time as this. You will correct it as you like and give to Swami. The typed copy contains my corrections. I shall try to send you the original too.

Bapu

* See letter No. 7.

5

[In those days Vinoba had a Brahmachari Ashram at Wardha, situated in the place now occupied by the Mahila Ashram, and it was Bapu's custom to go there for a few days' rest each year before attending the Congress session.]

Wardha,
Monday, 6-12-'26

चि. मीरां,

I had expected to hear from you today. This is my second letter to you. The first was a card. I see that it is possible to send you the *Autobiography* if it is written on Mondays as I have done. Here is the translation therefore. Please revise and post here the same day in which case it will be in time. If you cannot revise the same day you may send direct to Swami. This should reach you on Wednesday, and if it is posted even on Thursday I should get it in time on Saturday. The last day for posting to Ahmedabad for Y. I.* is Sunday here. Now you know what you can do. This arrangement will continue so long as I am here.

Here is Rolland's letter. 'Sparrow' has translated it for me. Here it is. If you think it is accurate, you need not translate anew for me.

Love,

Bapu

* *Young India.*

[After one full year in Sabarmati Ashram, Bapu had sent me to the Kanya Gurukul, then at Daryaganj, Delhi, for studying Hindi. At the same time I was to teach the students carding and spinning.]

चि. मीरां,

Your two letters came into my hands the same day. I am glad you wrote so fully. Please continue the habit. I miss you in my walks here. We traverse the same old route. I hope you got my two letters. Nothing yet certain about going to Gauhati. You will make it a point to see Hakimji * and M. † Mahomed Ali. You should see his wife and daughters too.

With love,

Wardha,
9-12-'26

Bapu

Shrimati Mirabai,
Kanya Gurukul,
Daryaganj,
Delhi.

* Hakim Ajmal Khan.
† Maulana.

7

Wardha,
11-12-'26 (Post Mark)

चि. मीरां,

I have your four letters. Two I have acknowledged already.

I suppose you know the meaning of चि. It stands for चिरंजीवी meaning 'long-lived'. That is the blessing which an elder prefixes to the names of the younger members of his family.

I like all your letters. I am glad you had an early opportunity of going to the Mussalman friend.

. . . .

You should give me your day's doings, and describe the prayers, the studies and the meals. Tell me what you are eating. How are your bowels acting ? What is the quantity of milk you are taking ? What are the times of your meals ? Are there mosquitoes there ? Do you take your walks regularly ? Do you write any Hindi ? Does anyone teach you ? What fruit are you getting ?

I duly got the corrected chapter. You should find out the posting time.

I leave Wardha on 21st inst. Motilalji insists on my going to Gauhati. I hope you will be getting your Y. I. regularly. If you do not, you should ask Swami and write to Mrityunjay to attend. I take it you will be getting Hindi *Navajivan* also.

You will not forget the Urdu script please.

The American friends, mother and daughter are still here. I think I told you about their arrival. The daughter

is a teacher in an important school. They are leaving tomorrow. Jamnalalji has over 40 guests on my account. Poor Jankibehn ! *

I am keeping exceptionally good health. Exercise regularly morning and evening.

You can't complain of any brevity about this letter.

With love,

Saturday.

Bapu

I was uncertain about the correctness of the passage in Rolland's letter which you have now corrected. It reads perfectly intelligible now. Please do not return the original. File it among your papers.

B.

Shrimati Mirabehn,
Kanya Gurukul,
Daryaganj,
Delhi.

8

Postcard

चि. मीरां,

I have been having your delightful letters. I dare not attempt a long letter just now. When I write to Rolland, it shall go through you. But do you think it is necessary to write ? . . . You must take long walks.

With love,

19-12-'26

Yours,
Bapu

Shrimati Mirabai,
Kanya Gurukul,
Daryaganj,
Delhi.

* Wife of Jamnalalji.

9

[Bapu was at the Gauhati Congress.]

Unrevised * 27-12-'26 (Post Mark)

चि. मीरां,

I have all your love letters. . . .

You are doing the right thing there. Watch everything. Mend where you can. Be still where you are helpless. You have gone there only as a learner. Your *business* is to finish your Hindi. You will teach and reform only by the way. . . . But this is not to criticize anything you have hitherto done. This is merely to assure you that you are doing quite well.

Why apologize about the expenses? We do want to be stingy. But we do not want to deny ourselves the things we need for keeping us fit for service. You know that you can get what funds you need from Mr. Gadodia.

Rita is *aritha* — the soap nut.

You will see many more Miss. . . .May your contact open their eyes. Raisina † is all you describe it to be and much worse. It is built with blood money. Instead of the blood circulating down to the feet, it is all being sucked by the head. Presently there will be meningitis and. . .!

Here the scenery is beautiful. Our hut is on the edge of the bank of the mighty Brahmaputra. It is damp and cold ; very windy. But the weather is most bracing if one would take vigorous exercise. I generally walk to the Congress tent — one mile and a little over.

---

* It was Bapu's custom, when signing his letters, to write 'unrevised' at the top, if he had not time to read them through.

† New Delhi.

I leave tomorrow for Calcutta where I expect to be for four days.

With love,

Bapu

Shrimati Mirabai,
Kanya Gurukul,
Daryaganj,
Delhi.

10

-12-'26

चि. मीरां,

I have two more letters from you. Yes, you may go to Haradwar * as soon as you wish. You need not stay there † for teaching carding and spinning unless it is a help to learning Hindi. As you do not seem to be getting much Hindi, it is better to go away at once. In no case must you endanger your health. You will, therefore, judge for yourself and do what you think is best. . . .

Your letter about the assassination ‡ makes me sad . . . .

Did you go to Swamiji's house ?

With love,

Yours,
Bapu

* Gurukul Kangri, then on the left bank of the River Ganga in its original site.

† Kanya Gurukul.

‡ Assassination of Swami Shraddhanand.

11

चि. मीरां,

I have your two letters. I see what you are passing through and I am glad of it. You have to love humanity in spite of itself. The Ashram is finally not at Sabarmati but in yourself. The vilest beings must enter there purified. That is the meaning of treating all alike and, in this universe of opposites, remaining unaffected even as the lotus remains unaffected by water though immersed in it.

I understand your programme. You may carry it out.

... ...

I am writing this at Sodepur, a suburb of Calcutta, where Satish Babu has built his Khadi works. It is a great effort. It has cost nearly Rs. 80,000.

We leave for Comilla tomorrow as per programme sent to you. But for future guidance it would be well to note that, when in doubt, send to the last address.

... ...

With love,

Bapu

3rd January, '27

Shrimati Mirabai,
Kanya Gurukul,
Daryaganj,
Delhi.

12

Unrevised

चि. मीरां,

I have your letter or letters is it? I am writing this against my time for going to the station.

I am glad of all the varied experiences you are having. I shall not be angry so long as you keep your health and your mental balance. For the rest we learn through mistakes. Not that I know of mistakes made by you. But where there is consciousness of mistakes, readiness to mend is sufficient penance and antidote in a majority of cases.

I had rich experiences in Kàshi but of these I have no time to speak.

With love,

Bapu

Benares alias Kashi,.
10-1-'27

13

[I can remember to this day how the teaching here expressed burned into my soul when I read it.

This is one of the letters that have remained with me like a beacon, lighting my way through the years.]

चि. मीरां,

I have your letter describing the drive with Hakimji. I do not mind either your tasting the dishes at Brijkishan's or the *pan* from Hakimji. The latter's tempting you with *pan* distresses me. It is bad stuff and he should never have

offered it to you. But opinions differ. He evidently considers it to be harmless. However the reasoning that you have employed for justifying the tasting of the dishes and the *pan* is in my opinion faulty. Why should one *know* the taste of what one does not need or wish to take? Do you know that this is the reasoning that has been applied to justify every form of vice? It is the million times told story of the forbidden apple. Why should I not know the taste of the thing I am asked not to take or touch? But you must not worry. If you do not understand my reasoning, you must argue with me patiently. If you appreciate my reasoning, it is to serve as warning in the future. But it must not result in self-reproach. There is no cause for it. The incident is trivial. But trivialities possess deadly potentialities. Hence the paternal warning.

... ...

I am writing this on the moving train during my silence which finishes at 9 p.m.

With love,

Bapu

10-1-'27

... ...

Can you decipher my writing?

Shrimati Mirabai,
Gurukul Kangri, via Haradwar,
Dist. Bijnor.

14

[Bapu was on tour.]

Unrevised

चि. मीरां,

I have your interesting booklet from Kangri. I read it through in a motor in full motion. There is no rest. But as you have rightly judged, the whole tour is inspiring. Champaran has sacred memories for me. Champaran really introduced me to India. It is a perfect delight to see these tens of thousands of childlike faces all shining with an indefinable hope. They readily part with their coppers and rupees. Idleness, which has now become second nature, they will not part with easily. But one feels that even that is going.

Tulsi Meher * is with me. We are very near Nepal as you must know. You must locate the places I pass through in your map. T. M. is eager to meet you before he ascends to the hills. But he thinks you are too far away.

It was quite like you to have gone in an ekka to the Government House. You have done your duty by the friends. †

You will walk out into the jungles about you with the young men there. They must have told you that the choice of the spot was Shraddhanandji's. The whole of the Gurukul conception was his.

---

* Tulsi Meher of Nepal was my first carding teacher in Sabarmati.

† I went to see the Home Member regarding two Muslim friends I had known in Berlin, who were at that time exiles.

Today we are in Bettiah — the place where I was longest when I was working for the people.

You should perhaps know that I send most of your letters to the Ashram for being read to the members. They are so beautiful. . . . If henceforth you want me to do otherwise, you will please tell me. I do not want you to restrain yourself because other eyes may see your letter. Our attitude should be this : We can pour out our hearts only where we can, but the waters may flow where they will. But all may not easily be able to assimilate or even appreciate that attitude. You will tell me how you feel.

Are you getting stronger ?

In order that you may not be anxious, know that I shall be writing to you every Monday at least. When the post will reach you, depends upon where I am. . . .

You are making your corrections in the autobiographical chapters as they come to you. It will be interesting to see your correction when the tour is finished.

With love,

Yours,
Bapu

Bettiah,
24-1-'27

15

चि. मीरां,

I have all your letters delivered in good time. The postal arrangements are extraordinarily good. Nothing has miscarried in spite of this incessant travelling.

We leave Bihar tonight not without regret on my part. Bihar has its own charms for me.

I must write a summary letter as there is much to write during the time I have.

You may take the following vow after calling together the chief friends there so that they may not be upset. Restrict yourself to three meals only, the last not to be after 7 p.m. No ghee to be smeared on *bhakharis*,* vegetables only plain boiled with or without salt. Milk unsweetened, no more than two vegetables at a time, no more than three fruits at a time. No limitation on drinks of water with lemon, honey, sugar, salt, soda. The vow to last till 20th March for the time being. This does not exclude anything taken for medicinal purposes. The whole is subject to alteration in the event of illness.

I think the above restrictions should answer the whole purpose. We must discuss the desirability of extending the period when we meet.†

No occasion to worry about feeling overhealthy so long as you do not become so fat as to make you unfit for brisk work. There is no danger of that happening. But in any event the vow obviates the remotest risk.

* *Rotis* prepared with ghee and salt.

† As far as I remember I prolonged, with Bapu's permission, this food vow up to one year, after which simple food had become a natural habit.

....Criticism of everything one does not approve, stifles independent judgement or its expression, especially when that criticism comes from loved ones. But I am glad of your own correction. Only you will not unnecessarily agitate yourself about these things. Self-correction should result in exhileration.*

No more can be written now as I must walk out to the station, 3 miles, just time enough to catch the train comfortably.

With love,

31-1-'27 Bapu

Shrimati Mirabai,
Gurukul Kangri,
Dist. Bijnor.

* Bapu had refrained from criticizing something he had not approved of in a previous letter of mine.

16

[Account-keeping was always a nightmare for me, and I finally reduced it to writing down everything and giving it to others to add up and balance.]

चि. मीरां,

I wrote yesterday a brief letter.

You need not worry about sending me your account. You should certainly keep an account of every pice spent, and that not on scraps of paper, but in a properly kept account book. It is incredibly simple. There are credit entries and debit entries. Cash is debtor to the extent of moneys received by it, creditor to the extent paid out. Therefore receipts go to the debit side and expenditure to the credit side. Thus :

Date	Dr. to	Amount	Date	Cr. by	Amount
12/8	Moneys received from Ashram	150/-/-		Paid for tonga	1/8/-
				Postage	3/8/-
				Balance	145/-/-
		150/-/-			150/-/-

This is how according to the English system all cash books are kept, and yours is a cash book. A ledger is an index for the different accounts in a cash book and a day-book. A day-book contains all transactions where no cash passes. Thus sales on credit and purchases on credit will be entered in a day-book. This is in practice the whole of account keeping.

I am surprised you had no wheel there. I must give you a travelling charkha such as I have. I am asking Khadi Pratisthan to send one to you. If you cannot manage it yourself, I must teach you when I come there.

Dhulia is a very restful place. We are accommodated in the house of a worker who joined me when I was working in Champaran. And here too lives a gentleman who wears a face gentler even than Andrews, if it is possible. Akola was another such place. And Akola has given me a bride for Manilal. She is Kishorlal's niece, 19 years old. Marriage will take place almost immediately. She will accompany Manilal when he leaves for S. A. She belongs to a godly family.

With love,

Bapu

Dhulia,
14-2-'27

Shrimati Mirabai,

Krishna Niwas,
Katra Khushal Rai,
Delhi.

17

Unrevised

चि. मीरां,

. . . We must measure people with their own measure and see how far they come up to it. You do not need this caution. But seeing that you have set a rigorous standard for yourself and you are in a strange environment, I am anxious for you not to lose your balance even by a hair's breadth.

I have too much pressure today to write more.

With love,

Yours,
Bapu

Sholapur,
21-2-'27

Shrimati Mirabai,
Gurukul Kangri,
Dist. Bijnor.

18

चि. मीरां,

I have your two letters.

This is early morning. I am sitting in a third class carriage at Bhusaval with Ba, Sushila, Manilal's wife, Manilal, Ramdas, Mahadev and Panditji who came to perform the marriage ceremony. The wedding was of the simplest character — no presents were accepted, no expense incurred.

To gain one more day, I decided to travel during my silence. I am travelling third class because I must not spend on second class for Manilal and his wife, and I do not want to cut myself off from the new addition the very first day of her joining the family. And as I have about six days of rest at the Ashram in front of me, and as this is an easy third class journey, I do not mind it; on the contrary I like it.*

I shall read your corrections in the *Autobiography* when I reach the Ashram. I had anticipated your many corrections in the chapters that had not been previously seen by you.†

With love,

7-3-'27

Yours,
Bapu

* From now onwards Bapu travelled third class more and more frequently, and finally it became an unbreakable rule.

† Certain chapters had been published in *Young India* without my seeing them, because of postal difficulties, and I had to correct them afterwards for the book.

19

14-3-'27

चि. मीरां,

I have all your letters. This is my last of the few days at the Ashram. We shall soon meet and hence no occasion to give you a long love letter. You must regain your lost health....

It is impossible for me to be there * earlier than 19th, for I finish a Submerged Classes Conference only on 17th. I would gladly have given up a day at the Ashram if I could have altered the dates of the Conference. But that was not to be thought of. I have now suggested that Ba or Mahadev should open the exhibition in Haradwar unless they will have someone else.

I do hope the wheel has arrived from Calcutta.

Did I tell you I had gained 5 more lb. in weight? On the day I reached here, I was nearly 108 lb. This is very good. I shall be weighed again this evening.

With love,

Bapu

Shrimati Mirabai,
Gurukul Kangri,
Dist. Bijnor.

* The Gurukul for the Convocation.

20

[Bapu had come to Gurukul Kangri Convocation, and gone again after a few days. I was once more separated from him for a long period. I left the Gurukul along with Bapu, but parted with him on the way, as I was to go to the Bhagwadbhakti Ashram, Rewari, for further Hindustani studies.

Bapu's touring and work was putting him to tremendous strain. I instinctively felt the possibility of a dangerous breakdown coming, and this made the renewed separation unbearable. In the train as I travelled away to Rewari, I was suffocated with the bitterest tears. Five days later came the wire which follows this letter.]

On the train
After Bharatpur
22-3-'27

चि. मीरां,

The parting today was sad, because I saw that I pained you. And yet it was inevitable. I want you to be a perfect woman. I want you to shed all angularities. All unnecessary reserve must go. Ashram is the centre of your home, but wherever you happen to be must be your home. Without being a burden on people with whom we come in contact, we must get the things we need from them. We must feel one with all. And I have discovered that we never give without receiving consciously or unconsciously. There is a reserve which I want us all to have. But that reserve must be a fruit of self-denial, not sensitiveness. Yours is due to sensitiveness. This must go. I thought I would draw your attention. But I saw that I should have waited. However, the thing is done.

Do throw off the nervousness. You must not cling to me as in this body. The spirit without the body is ever with you. And that is more than the feeble embodied im-

prisoned spirit with all the limitations that flesh is heir to. The spirit without the flesh is perfect, and that is all we need. This can be felt only when we practise detachment. This you must now try to achieve.

This is how I would grow if I were you. But you should grow along your own lines. You will, therefore, reject all I have said in this, that does not appeal to your heart or head. You must retain your individuality at all cost. Resist me when you must. For, I may judge you wrongly in spite of all my love for you. I do not want you to impute infallibility to me.

With love,

Yours,
Bapu

Shrimati Mirabai,
Bhagwadbhakti Ashram,
Rampura,
Rewari.

21

[This was the breakdown from which dates the knowledge of Bapu's blood-pressure. No doubt the blood-pressure had been present for some time past, but Bapu's extraordinary capacity for relentless and cheerful work had kept it unnoticed.]

Telegram

Date : 27-3-'27

Office of origin : Nipani

Mirabai Bhagwadbhakti Ashram Rampura Rewari. Bapu has narrowly escaped attack of apoplexy high blood-pressure still continues doctors ascribe it to overwork nervous exhaustion and advise complete rest cancellation all programmes hot months at any rate leaving for Belgaum twentyeighth.

Mahadev

22

चि. मीरां,

Your letter and also wire. You must not be perturbed. The crash was bound to come some day. You must forget me in the body. You can't have it for ever. You must do the work in front of you. I must not write more for fear of offending the doctor and those around me. I am taking as much rest as I think I need. But I cannot pamper the body over much. You must promise not to worry. Merge yourself in your work.

With love,

Yours,
Bapu

1-4-'27 (Post Mark)

Shrimati Miraben,
Bhagwadbhakti Ashram,
Rewari (B. B. C. I. Ry.)

चि. मीरां,

Though you absolve me from having to write to you I cannot deny myself the joy of writing to you every Monday. Writing love letters is a recreation, not a task one would seek an excuse to shirk. I am better though still weak.

Dr. Mehta came all the way from Bombay to examine the body. He is emphatically of opinion that all touring should be given up for some months to come. He does not forbid reading in the bed or even occasional letters to friends. If I take full rest he thinks that I would regain most of the lost strength but never be strong enough to undertake the exacting tours such as the one that came to an abrupt end on the 25th ultimo. We shall see. If the tour is finally cancelled, I must take my rest at the Ashram. I shall come to a decision today or tomorrow. The probability is that it will be cancelled. Even so I shall not move out before Tuesday next week.

But why are you having these attacks ? * Is it mere spiritual agony or has the climate also anything to do with it ? If you need a bracing climate you must move out. How do you find the climate there ?. . .

With love,

4-4-'27 Bapu

Shrimati Miraben,
Bhagwadbhakti Ashram,
Rampura,
Rewari.

* The struggle in the heart was going on.

24

चि. मीरां,

I have your letters. Of course you were quite right in delivering your whole soul to me. I quite agree with you that we have to evolve an organization and that therefore there should be method about the business. But in your affection for me perhaps there is a trace of impatience with the people who organized the tours. However all will profit by the warning received. I am taking all the necessary rest amid these very lovely surroundings and shall have more when I am taken to Mysore. Rest is not to be taken at the Ashram. Dr. Mehta insisted on a cool place being selected. And I am to remain where I was to tour during April.

You can see from the handwriting that I am getting stronger day by day. I had quite a fair walk yesterday. So much for myself.

I like this idea of your riding. It should brace you and enable you too, to go to the villages and see something of rural life. Have they provided you with a proper saddle ? You should try to follow all the shades of village Hindi. I am not going to be satisfied till you have mastered Hindi so well as to be able to follow and speak the villagers' Hindi. Do not be frightened. It will come because of your love of your work. I shall not be impatient. But for your work a thorough knowledge of Hindi is a necessity. You will therefore seek every occasion for speaking and knowing it. Insist on understanding all that goes on about you.

. . . .

With love,

Bapu

Mahadev and Devdas have gone out to hawk Khadi.

11-4-'27

Shrimati Miraben,
Bhagwadbhakti Ashram.

25

चि. मीरां,

I must write on this fasting day to acknowledge your letter containing extracts from Beethoven.* They are good spiritual food. I don't want you to forget your music or your taste for it. It would be cruel to forget that to which you owe so much, and which has really brought you to me.†

Please thank the Maharajji and all friends for their kind invitation. But for the present I must go to Nandi Hills in Mysore. I know that I should be quite happy there if I could come.

We have kept the week here in royal style.‡ One wheel has been kept going 16 hours daily. The output has been more than 3,000 rounds of 4 ft. each daily. Almost all kept the fast on 6th and 13th.

I shall expect here still more letters from you.

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* As far as I can remember, I quoted extracts from Romain Rolland's *Life of Beethoven*, and one thing I gave was Beethoven's motto, "Through Suffering, Joy".

† See Preface P. 3.

‡ National Week.

Kaka has sent a copy of your translation of Rolland's letter. The translation is very good indeed. The original could not be better.

I am glad you met the Commissioner there. You are getting your deserts — those of one adopted by a scavenger. You must forget what you *have been.* You have to realize what you *are.* These poor officials really do not know where they are when they see you. They cannot forget your antecedents and naturally get perplexed. You have to put them at ease. When the present King — so tradition says — was enlisted as a sailor he was treated as such, and had in common with the rest black coffee and black bread for breakfast. This was the least part of the affair. He was taken for a common sailor. So one day will you be taken for a common village girl. That would be your pride and mine.

With love,

13-4-'27

Bapu

Shrimati Miraben,
Bhagwadbhakti Ashram,
Rampura, Rewari.

26

चि. मीरां,

I have your letters.

You must not put yourself under over-strain. If the teaching overtaxes you, it must be reduced and so the learning. You may make it clear to the people about you as to your physical capacity. On no account must you lose your health. Do you get proper fruit and milk ?

I am getting on famously. For the last two days, I have been taking walks both morning and evening without suffering any harm. As you know, I have replaced one fruit with a vegetable and am taking *bhakhari*.

We leave Amboli today and leave Belgaum tomorrow if all goes well. Nandi Hills, Mysore, will be the address for the next two months.

I shall not leave this place without much regret. The spot itself is delightful. But what has attached one to this place is the exceptional character of the Chief. From all the accounts received by me he appears to be an ideal Chief. He draws a fixed sum from the State revenue for his personal expenses. He mixes freely with his people. He has visited every one of his 125 villages. He lives an abstemious life and his wife is worthy of him. I have met him often and his frank and easy manners have pleased me. Hence it is that I like this place so much. But we can't do always the things we like. We shall be leaving inside of a few hours.

I expect a report of the new Charkha. . . .

With love,

18-4-'27 Bapu

Shrimati Mirabai,
Rewari.

27

Unrevised

चि. मीरां,

I have your 4 letters of which 3 were received together yesterday.

You must have got the wire of departure sent to you from Belgaum on 19th.

One of your letters yesterday prompted me to send you a peremptory wire asking you to come to Nandi. But I restrained myself. The other two letters were less gloomy. But even so, if the separation becomes unbearable, you must come without waiting for an answer or any prompting from me. The love of the people round you should really strengthen you and keep you there. Your letter, describing the affection of the people there is most touching and it would be a matter for sorrow if you cannot be at peace with yourself there. But no one can suddenly change one's nature, and if your effort to compose yourself there becomes fruitless, you should tell the friends there so plainly and come away here without the slightest hesitation. *On no account* should there be a breakdown there. You must not try your nerves to the breaking point.

This is the 6th day here. I am not yet acclimatized. I have not retained the energy and the strength I felt at Amboli, but doctors assure me that Nandi must in the end be more beneficial than Amboli. They say that this is an ideal place for blood-pressure men. There is no cause whatsoever for worry or anxiety.

Since you were so worried about the forgetfulness about the two fasts, it was well that you fasted.* There is no doubt that fasting is a good thing even physically where there is a nervous strain. It would certainly have been well, if I had fasted before the collapse came. The strain of that day was terrific. But this is wisdom after the event. One may profit by that stupid mistake of mine. I call it stupid because I was aware of the strain and of the merit of fasting in such circumstances. But the Devil is ever after us and catches us at our weakest. He found me weak and wanting and trapped me. Your fast therefore does not worry me. Only you will know when to take it and how to take it.

You must develop iron nerves. It is necessary for our work.

God be with you.

With love,

Bapu

Nandi Hills (Mysore),
25-4-'27

Shrimati Mirabai,
Bhagwadbhakti Ashram,
Rampura, Rewari.

---

* I had forgotten to fast on the first and last days of the National Week which begins on the 6th and ends on the 13th of April.

28

चि. मीरां,

I must write as often as I can for the time being. I shall anxiously await your reply to yesterday's letter. You must cheer up.

If there are carpenters there, you should get the travelling wheel mended. Where you can yourself do the mending, you should do it yourself. You may ask the friends there for the necessary tools or buy some. They are always handy.

I am feeling stronger than yesterday. Subbiah is waiting for the post.

With love,

Yours,
Bapu

Tuesday,

26-4-'27

Shrimati Mirabai,
Bhagwadbhakti Ashram,
Rampura, Rewari.

29

Unrevised

चि. मीरां,

I have your cheerful letter. If you can realize every word of what you have written, all your trouble is over and also my anxiety. We really live through and in our work. We perish through our perishable bodies, if instead of using them as temporary instruments, we identify ourselves with them.

The more I observe and study things, the more convinced I become that sorrow over separation and death is perhaps the greatest delusion. To realize that it is a delusion is to become free. There is no death, no separation of the substance. And yet the tragedy of it is that though we love friends for the substance we recognize in them, we deplore the destruction of the insubstantial that covers the substance for the time being. Whereas real friendship should be used to reach the whole through the fragment. You seem to have got the truth for the moment. Let it abide for ever.*

. . . .

With love,

27-4-'27 Bapu

Shrimati Mirabai,
Rewari.

* I had grasped the truth with my intellect, but the heart lagged behind for still many years after this.

Unrevised

चि. मीरां,

Your latest letter is still more cheerful. I hope this mood will last. I very nearly sent you a card in Hindi today. But it was too late. This is written after the receipt of the post, but also after its departure which precedes the receipt.

I have made a slight change in the food here which is approved by a distinguished doctor who is living nearby. I am now taking raw milk and adding now and then juice of a few *neem* leaves, and have omitted *chapatis* and vegetables for the time being. I may revert to the latter two if it becomes necessary. There is now noticed a decline in the blood-pressure for the first time since the collapse. I am feeling altogether better.

The rest through Mahadev.

With love,

28-4-'27

Bapu

29th Morning.

. . . .

I fancy I have forgotten to answer a question you asked in one of your letters. Undoubtedly the interpretation of your vow is that your last meal should be finished before 7 p.m. or dusk whichever the vow is. You are therefore right in your interpretation. The rule regarding vows is, when in doubt, interpret against yourself i.e. in favour of greater restriction.*

Bapu

* This has been another beaconlight throughout the years, for guidance not only in fasts but in all matters where doubt arises.

Please tell Lady Slade * I am thankful for her concern about me.

Bapu

Shrimati Mirabai,
Bhagwadbhakti Ashram,
Rampura,
Rewari, (B. B. & C. I. Rly.).

31

Unrevised

चि. मीरां,

I wrote to you a p. c. in Hindi just to tell you that I was thinking constantly of you and to see whether you could read and understand my Hindi. Do not be alarmed. I do not propose to write to you always in Hindi. But if you can follow my Hindi, I do want now and then to write my extra letters in Hindi i.e., if you like the idea, not otherwise.

Now for your disturbing wire. I wonder what in my letters has prompted it. You can have no notion of the energy I have already regained. I have written for N. J. † four articles this week. For Y. I. I wrote three last week. I am really doing almost the normal work for the papers now. And I do a fair amount of love letters.

But all this is nothing compared to the result of medical examination yesterday. The pressure dropped from 188 to 155, and 155 to 160 is the normal for my age. I have been walking for the last three days over 1 mile per day

* My mother.

† *Navajivan*, the Gujarati counterpart of *Young India*.

in two periods, each extending to 30 minutes. This is more than Amboli. So there is now no anxiety about my health. There can be no question now of leaving Nandi. It would be foolish to think of leaving it till my previous strength is attained, if it can be at all, or till the season for Nandi ends, which it does about July.

I observe from your wire that in spite of your previous letter of attainment of peace, the pendulum has swung back and that you are again perturbed. This does not surprise me. If our lucid moments were lasting, nothing further will remain to be done. Unfortunately or fortunately, we have to pass through many an ebb and flow before we settle down to real peace.

I have therefore left you free to do as you please. Better certainly if you can keep your peace and stay. Equally certainly come away if you cannot keep your peace. Only in any decision you come to, please eliminate the question of my health. For if you come, you would find little difference between me as you saw me in Kangri and me as I am now. Dive deep into yourself then and find out, if you can, where you are and act accordingly irrespective of what I would like you to do. Or put it another way. I would like you to do what your inner spirit tells you to do.

With love,

Nandi Hills,
2-5-'27

Bapu

Shrimati Mirabai,
Rewari.

32

चि. मीरां,

I had your sweet wire and your letter. Fall it was.* But I was not ruffled. I know that you fell but to rise. When moments of exaltation become a permanent part of our lives, we need little further. Therefore I was not unprepared for the fall in the barometer. You will come when you must. Only you will do nothing without fullest deliberation.

I now walk almost my usual pace. The round I took 4 days ago has now been doubled. Progress is steady. You do not expect me each time now to say I am getting on. You will know when there is an interruption.

Pray never rely upon the newspapers. You get your information first-hand.

With love,

Yours,
Bapu

7-5-'27

Shrimati Mirabai,
Rewari.

* In spite of the intellectual realization the heart had already failed me.

33

Unrevised

चि. मीरां,

I hope you are getting all the letters I have been writing to you of late. Probably one letter every other day on an average.

I have your further letter. But I see you will be some time before you regain your balance. I do not mind the ups and downs so long as you retain the elasticity. My own opinion is this — it will be perfectly natural for you to come to me wherever I am *after* finishing your allotted task, whenever that happens. An ordinary person may not give up a self-imposed programme. But if you become highly emotional and your nerves remain under tension, you should come even though your course may not be finished.

Naturally I am anxious for you to finish your course. I should not like to have to think that it was beyond you. But your health is more precious to me than your studies or any other preparation.

You must not think of coming to me for my health. For it is good and I cannot be looked after better even if you came. If I needed your nursing, I should wire for you. But such an event will not happen, if only because I have got into the habit of taking nursing from anybody and I train new nurses to my requirements. There are more nurses than I need here. So if you come in the hope of doing some personal service, you would feel idle and yawning.

Now for the necessity of personal touch. My own opinion is that it is necessary in the preliminary stages. And then the touch comes through joint work. You come in daily touch with me by doing my work as if it was your

own. And this can, must and will outlast the existence of this physical body of mine. You are, and will be, in touch whether I am alive or dead. And that is what I want you to be. You have come to me not for me, but for my ideals in so far as I live them. You *now* know how far I live the ideals I set forth. It is now for you to work out those ideals and practise them to greater perfection than has been given to me to do. He or she who does that will be my first heir and representative. I want you to be the first, if only because you studied me from a distance and made your choice. And when, in the course of the work, God brings us physically together, it is well, but it is well also when He keeps us apart in pursuance of the common object.

But this is counsel of perfection. Having listened to it and understood it, you are free to do as you choose. If you cannot contain yourself, you must come, and not feel that I shall be displeased. I should be displeased if you did violence to yourself and became prostrate.

With love,

Bapu

Sunday,

8-5-'27

Shrimati Mirabai,
Bhagwadbhakti Ashram,
Rampura, Rewari.

34

चि. मीरां,

I had two letters again. How is it that letters bearing different dates are received the same day in different packets ?

I have nothing more to say today. I am glad you have completely regained your balance.

. . . .

What has brought Valunjkar and Gangabai ? Remember me to them. I am glad for your sake that they are there.

With love,

Yours,
Bapu

Monday,

9-5-'27

Shrimati Mirabai,
Bhagwadbhakti Ashram,
Rewari.

चि. मीरां,

Again I have your two letters delivered the same day. I am so glad you seem to have settled down. But whenever you feel unsettled, you will not hesitate to tell me about it, as you now know from *experience* that I shall be patient. I am most anxious that you should not appear to be what you are not. I must take you as you are and help you to be what you should be. That I can only do if I give you no cause to fear me. That is why I told you once — I wanted to be not merely in the place of father but mother also to you.

You will not leave the D. C. alone so long as he entertains your letter. Answer politely all his doubts and queries. Tell him if you know the difference between the Persian wheel which we have and the R.lift,* as also why spinning is not merely one of the industries, but is the key industry of the nation.

There seems to be still some misunderstanding about my coming there. I am anxious to be there for two reasons. I want to see the place about which I have heard so much and I want to be with you. But the time I do not know. I am not likely to leave the South yet for 4 months, I fear. But it is no use forecasting events. . . .

I am well,

With love,

12-5-'27

Bapu

---

* Ramchandra Lift. A contrivance, invented by one Ramchandran, for drawing water from a well with the help of bullocks.

36

Unrevised

चि. मीरां,

I have your letter. You may be declared to be a discharged patient now I suppose, and so I have eased down a bit in my sending you love letters.

I am making steady progress. Bangalore doctors came today and they found the blood-pressure to be only 150 and the general condition quite good. They now want me to eat more. I shall see what is possible in that direction. I have been obliged to omit bread and vegetable because I thought them to be too heavy. I must now make another attempt. But there is no doubt about my getting better.

I see you are making headway with your work. How many women are there and how many girls ? How many men and how many boys ? Give me, when you can, a general idea of the Ashram and its inmates.

I do not know if anybody has told you that at Sabarmati, of late, we have been having much too much attention from thieves. Once our watchman suffered bad injuries in a scuffle with them. That woke me to a sense of our duty. And I thought that this work of guarding was as much *our* duty as a common kitchen. I therefore suggested that we must become our own watchmen and watchwomen and that we should seek, not to beat the thieves out of the Ashram, but try to wean them from their error, if they could be got at and that we should risk being beaten by them. The suggestion has been adopted and there are now over thirty volunteers including five women. This is a good beginning.

The common kitchen is daily improving. Shankaran has proved an ideal chief and chef. There are over twenty dining at the kitchen. All this will delight your heart when you return.

With love,

Nandi Hills, Yours,

16-5-'27 Bapu

37

चि. मीरां,

Throughout the week I have not written to you though I have received more than one letter from you. And for the most part, for the present, I propose not to write more than once per week. I want to conserve my energy for the work for Y. I., N. J. and Gita.* I am doing now at least five times as much as I used to on the Gita. I want, if possible, to finish the translation before the end of August. And during this rest, I would like to give more attention to Y. I. and N. J. without feeling in any way responsible for filling the columns. But, of course, I shall write oftener if necessary, or if you again have those moods returning. But you will not now.

I am so glad you resisted the *bhang*. It is as bad almost as liquor. In any case, you will remember what I wrote

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* Gujarati Translation.

over the betel leaf offered by Hakimji — never to eat a single thing without knowing it and its quality. In case of duobt always refrain and refer to me if necessary. . . .

I am looking forward to your translation of Rolland's letter to you.

I have resumed bread or *bhakhari* and a vegetable for the midday meal. Today is the fifth day. Nothing untoward so far. I am walking too better.

With love,

Yours,
Bapu

23-5-'27

Shrimati Mirabai,
Rewari.

38

Nandi Hills,
28th May 1927

चि. मीरां,

I have your two letters as also your telegram. In order not to delay replying for two days, I am resorting to dictation. I do not want to break the rule, as far as possible, of not writing letters myself except during silence. Both your letters are precious. I now understand the Ashram much better than I ever did before. It is almost like having been there myself and seen it. So characteristic is your account, and it is usefully supplemented by Valunjkar's letter.

You did well in not entering into the comparative merits of respective parties, and I do hope that you will remain unmoved even if you hear comparisons that may not please you. Those who enter into comparisons do so honestly. That it is improper to enter into comparisons, they do not know. And what is the use of being ruffled by listening to an expression of views honestly held?

... ...

Of course, our formula has been Hindi first, everything else after.... There are innumerable things you can do usefully wherever you are placed. And the test of the possession of the religious sense really consists in one's being able to pick out the 'rightest' thing out of many things which are all 'right' more or less. This is the meaning of a verse in the *Bhagawad Gita* which says: 'Better even to die doing one's duty, however lowly it may be, than doing some other's, however grand it may be.' And so, I have myself not a shadow of doubt that you will be entitled to pass by many things which you can easily do, if the one

thing for which you have left Sabarmati has at all to be sacrificed or neglected. And, if there or at any other place, you become an unwelcome visitor because of your insistence upon that one thing, that is sufficient warning for you to leave the place. And when you feel that imperative call, you will simply not listen to any other suggestion. But that burning overpowering desire must come from within. I must not goad, I *will* not goad. I shall be entirely satisfied with what progress you can make, no matter how slow it is. You will do your Hindi in the way that you think is best, and if you find that it is more conducive to your peace of mind to have several other occupations side by side with Hindi, you will take them up. Do not therefore please continuously think of what I would like, but do what you think you can easily, without impairing your health, of both body and mind; and in the execution of your plan, when you want my assistance or advice, you shall fall back upon it immediately. . . .

With love,

Yours,
Bapu

39

चि. मीरां,

I sent you a fairly long reply to your two letters and wire. I have not heard in continuation of your wire. This dictation enables me to overtake much work without tiring me, as I can do the dictation lying down.

It is likely that in the course of a few days we shall remove to Bangalore, as it is getting very windy here and the climate seems to be too bracing for me. I must not yet take brisk walks. You may therefore safely write your letters now addressed Bangalore. Kumara Park will very probably be the address. You will say Bangalore City because there are two watertight divisions, Cantonment and City, and unless 'City' is mentioned, the letters first go to the Cantonment, as they do all over India, where there is also a Cantonment.

There is nothing new to report so far as health is concerned. I think I did tell you that I had reverted to *bhakhari* and a vegetable.

With love,

Bapu

Nandi,
29-5-'27

[I had now left Bhagwadbhakti Ashram, Rewari, and was spending a short time at Sabarmati after having been to see Bapu at Bangalore, and before going to Vinoba's Ashram at Wardha for continuing my Hindi studies.]

4-7-'27

चि. मीरां,

I had expected a letter from you today. But there is nothing as yet. There is just a slight chance of one more post. I hope you were not overcrowded in the train and that there was no difficulty at Guntakal.

How well you put it ? You were parting but to come nearer. It was quite true. You did well in coming and equally well in leaving, when you did.

Remember my parting words. You are not to kill yourself or ruin your health in trying to finish Hindi in two months. Let us hope that you will finish it. But it does not matter in the least if you cannot. Yours is but to try. Again do not take the vow to use only Hindi in Wardha unless you feel practically driven to it. Nothing hangs by it. You need not consider what I would like. In matters like this there should be no question of considering my opinion or wishes. After all it is a question of choosing the best way of *doing* Hindi. The way that suits you is the best for you and no other.

With love,

4-7-'27

Bapu

The opening ceremony went off yesterday without any difficulty. I stood the strain well. The doctors came afterwards and they were satisfied to find no alteration in the pulse. I hope you left your constipation here.

Bapu

Immediately after handing this for the post, I got your expected beautiful letter.* It is perfectly intelligible. There are very few mistakes. Continue to write as often as you like.

B.

Shrimati Miraben,
Satyagraha Ashram,
Sabarmati.

41

चि. मीरां,

I have your letter after the wire. You must have received my usual weekly letter. I sent also a postcard to Wardha, but that was merely to tell you that I had sent the main letter to Sabarmati. I am glad you decided to stay on and to get the doctor's report. If we knew all the laws of nature or having known, had the power to obey them in thought, word and deed, we would be God Himself and not need to do anything at all. As it is, we hardly know the laws and have little power to obey them. Hence disease and all its effects. It is, therefore, enough for us to realize that every illness is but a breach of some unknown law of nature and to strive to know the laws and pray for power to obey. Heart prayer, therefore, whilst we are ill, is both work and medicine.

I went through another day's strain yesterday and stood it extremely well, better even than last Sunday. I am in no hurry to have your Hindi letters.

With love,

9-7-'27

Bapu

* in Hindi.

42

Kumara Park,
Bangalore, 17th July '27

चि. मीरां,

... ...

Do tell me for my information whatever improvement you would suggest about spinning, prayer, kitchen etc. I would then be able to correct you if you have come to a hasty judgement; or, if I accept your judgement, I might suggest the improvement.

One earns the right of fiercest criticism when one has convinced one's neighbours of one's affection for them and one's sound judgement, and when one is sure of not being in the slightest degree ruffled if one's judgement is not accepted or enforced. In other words, there should be love faculty for clear perception and complete toleration to enable one to criticize.

... ...

With love,

Bapu

43

Half revised

चि. मीरां,

I sent you a letter yesterday. I therefore do not want to say much today.

... ...

You will not experiment there with your health, but eat what you need. Order the quantity of fruit you need as you used to at the Ashram and if anybody sends any fruit to you, keep what *you* need and send the rest to the

kitchen i.e. Vinoba. Do not think that the others need it because you need it. You do not need the *jowari* that the others need. That fruit happens to be a delicacy as well as food is perhaps unfortunate. It is enough if we learnt to take delicacies too as we would medicine, in their proper measure and then we may harden our hearts and eat them although the others may not get them. The dangers surrounding this position are too patent to require mention. People have accommodated themselves to even vices under the plea of necessity. But we need not be afraid of such awkward consequences, if we would keep a ceaseless watch over ourselves. There are dangers every way we turn. But we must obey *our* fundamental natures, be the cost what it may.

This has been a longer letter than I had wanted it to be.

With love,

I am quite well.

Bapu

18-7-'27

Shrimati Miraben,
Satyagraha Ashram.

44

7-9-'27

चि. मीरां,

I anxiously wait for your wires and they come but not to present me with a clean bill.* But we must not grumble. Even illness must be turned to advantage and must be taken cheerfully. Your last wire has come just now to tell me that perhaps fever is under control. Let us hope it is. I often think of wiring to you, but say to myself I have no right. My prayers and blessings are with you always.

" The same in happiness and misery " — is the teaching of the *Gita*.

With love,

Bapu

---

* I had been having a severe attack of malaria. My temperature had been up to over 105.

45

[After the severe attack of malaria, I was on my way to Poona for recouping my health.]

Unrevised

चि. मीरां,

I could not help sending you a wire of thanksgiving yesterday. These have been somewhat anxious days. Though I have not written much or telegraphed to you, my spirit has hovered about and watched over you. I knew that if I sent you a wire daily, you would like it, but I thought that I must not. Letter writing has been almost impossible these trying days.

They leave me just enough time to attend to the programme before me. I have been pouring my soul out to the various audiences. That leaves me little energy for anything else. On the top of that come the reading of Miss Mayo's book and the heavy article on it.

But it has been a matter of the greatest relief to me to know that Jamnalalji was with you. Thank God, it all seems to be over now. It has been a good test.

And *Ramanama* ! If that has become a living reality with you, it is a great thing indeed. But you shall give me your experiences when you are stronger. I want them all and I want to know also why you have been delirious or hysterical. Of course, often we don't know. Now you will go gently. Take all the rest you need. Watch yourself and if any change in your food is necessary, make it. Find out

the cause of the enlarged spleen. Stay in Poona as long as you like. Ask for the convenience you need. What you cannot mention to anybody else, you will mention to me. I am faring all right. Rajagopalachari protects me as much as any human being can. He wears himself out in trying to shield me. And I know that the strain is too much for him, but I do not interfere. If God wants this tour to be finished, He will keep those who must be, from all harm. You are, therefore, not to worry about me.

Unless you think otherwise, send this to mother.

With love,

12-9-'27 Bapu

Shri Miraben,
C/o Seth Jamnalal Bajaj,
Kalbadevi Road, Bombay.

[While I was at Poona, repeated news of the severe strain Bapu was undergoing in his South Indian tour had been more than I could bear and I had been to see him.]

चि. मीरां,

I could not restrain myself from sending you a love message on reaching here. I felt very sad after letting you go. I have been very severe with you, but I could not do otherwise. I had to perform an operation and I steadied myself for it. Now let us hope all would go on smoothly, and that all the weakness is gone.

I have your two missing letters just now, but of that later. I am writing this against the posting time. You won't worry about me on any account whatsoever.

With love,

Bapu

28-9-'27

Shrimati Miraben,
Satyagraha Ashram,
Sabarmati.

47

Postcard

चि. मीरां,

This is merely to tell you I can't dismiss you from my mind. Every surgeon has soothing ointment after a severe operation. This is my ointment. . . .

With love,

29-9-'27

Bapu

Shrimati Miraben,
Satyagraha Ashram,
Sabarmati.

48

चि. मीरां,

I have your p.c. and the train letter. I have never been so anxious as this time to hear from you, for I sent you away too quickly after a serious operation. But the sending you away was a part of the operation. Poor Anna ! He too tells me that you were gloomy and wants me to soothe you. Jamnalalji says I should have kept you with me. Well, you are going to belie their fears and keep quite well and cheerful. You haunted me in my sleep last night and were reported by friends to whom you had been sent, to be delirious, but without any danger. They said, "You need not be anxious. We are doing all that is humanly possible." And with this I woke up troubled in mind and prayed that you may be free from all harm. And your letter gave me great joy.

You are not disgraced. There is no watch over you. Chhaganlal and Krishnadas are to be your nurses and comforters. I know that you are going to get over your nervousness. The Hindi incubus is no more to worry you. I do not care if you do not speak a word of Hindi though you know much by this time. So even there, there is no cause for disappointment. My confidence in your robustness is no doubt shaken, but not my love. The robustness will come because you are a true striver.

Surendraji suggests that you should cook separately. If that is necessary, you will do so. No overstraining whatsoever about anything.

With love,

Bapu

2nd Oct. '27

Shrimati Miraben,
Sabarmati.

49

Postcard

चि. मीरां,

This is from Tuticorin. I had expected something from you here. I have news from the Ashram of your safe arrival there. May God bless you.

Love,

Bapu

6-10-'27

Shrimati Miraben,
Sabarmati.

50

चि. मीरां,

I am not going to write to you everyday. For I fancy you do not need any soothing ointment. The wound must be healed by this time. And your letter from the Ashram reassures me.

Yes, you may take up the dairy work or whatever you like. How about your food ? . . .

With love,

8-10-'27

Bapu

51

चि. मीरां,

. . . .

There is no doubt that I want rest. But who will give it to me ? Do we get all we want ? If we did, where would our faith have any play at all ? Sufficient to know that not a blade moves but by His will. He will take care, if we will but trust Him, not after the manner of those who will take all the care that money can procure and then trust. That we must take some care is true. But men of trust will not do violence to their own nature and go out of their way to take precautions and adopt remedies which ordinary men have no means to command. The formula therefore is the less care the better and no more than the least of us can procure by reasonable effort. Judged by this standard, the care I take of myself and that is being bestowed on me, is out of all proportion and inconsistent with my profession of faith in God. You will thus see that everything I do in this direction appears to me to be exaggerated and I often

feel that it would be a great benefit if I could be neglected for a time. As it is I am wrapped in cotton wool.

It is very likely that there will be another interruption and I shall have to go to Delhi for a day or two. I may know in the course of the day.

Love,

Bapu

24-10-'27

Shrimati Miraben,
Sabarmati.

52

चि. मीरां,

This is being written on a moving jolting train. And I am disinclined to do any writing at all today. It is now 4 p.m. when I have commenced the Monday letters. I have done a very fair amount of sleeping and an equal amount of listening to two friends.

I want you to tell me all you saw at the dairy and the pinjrapol and the names of the....* But perhaps there will be hardly time for you to write in reply so as to reach me in Delhi. For, if I finish with the Viceroy on 2nd at the very first interview, I shall hope to leave that very day for Sabarmati. Let us see. There is no warrant to hope much from the interview, but I would not reject the advance on that ground.

Love,

Bapu

Monday.

---

* Undecipherable.

53

[I had gone to Bardoli Ashram in connection with Khadi work. It was during the time of the celebrated Bardoli Satyagraha.]

चि. मीरां,

I am glad your fever has left you. You must be strong and send me your weight. You are there under Vallabhbhai's jurisdiction. If he wants you, you may stay on and take part in the struggle to the extent desired by him. You may come whenever you like to fetch your things, if you are to stay there beyond your programme as originally mapped.

Love,

11-5-'28 Bapu

Shrimati Miraben,
Bardoli.

54

[I had returned to Sabarmati and Bapu was in Bardoli.]

Dictated

Swaraj Ashram,
Bardoli, 10-8-'28

चि. मीरां,

... ...

We had death of a very brave young girl at the Swaraj Ashram, who was quite all right yesterday and came in order to meet her father * who is at the Sabarmati jail and whose discharge was imminent. She developed vio-

* One of the peasant Satyagrahis.

lent pain in the abdominal region. Doctors could not diagnose. She died peacefully early in the morning. And so, though I am mechanically doing today's programme, I am holding silent converse with the God of Death and making the meaning of death more clear for myself.

More when we meet.

Love,

Bapu

55

[Bapu was at Sabarmati and I had gone out on a tour for Khadi work.]

Unrevised 27-10-'28

चि. मीरां,

I have been writing since 2-30 a.m., Kusum having got Malaria. There are so many now ailing. Chhaganlal Joshi's whole family is ailing ; Narandas has a relapse ; Ba had a severe time ; Pyarelal is prostrate ; Chhotelal is threatening again ; even the strong Surendra has not escaped. There are others who need not be mentioned. Standenath I must not forget. He had a bad attack. So you may imagine the time I am having. Mahadeo is in Bardoli.

Well, in spite of the catalogue, God seems to want work from me and keeps me fairly fit. But who knows. . .?

Things are moving steadily. The calf incident * has occupied my attention a great deal. It has done much good in that it has set people thinking.

* A young heifer in the Sabarmati Ashram dairy had fallen ill; the sickness was incurable and it lay on its side helpless and in great suffering for many days. Bapu decided that the kindest thing would be to relieve it of its tortured life. But he did not wish to take the step without carrying with him the approval of the inmates of the

(Here I had to stop for the prayer)

4-15 p.m.

Harjivan Kotak sends the enclosed telegram from Shrinagar. If you do not go to Nepal, I would like you to retrace your steps and visit Kashmir. You should see it for its mountains as well as its Khadi work.

Pandit Motilalji is here today.

I expect to go to Wardha during the last week of November.

Love,

Bapu

Shrimati Mirabai,
Khadi Karyalaya,
Muzaffarpur,
Bihar.

Ashram. For two or three days, intense discussion prevailed. Ba and Kashiben could not tolerate the idea of taking the heifer's life. So Bapu said, "Then you both go to the cowshed and nurse the heifer just as you would nurse your own child." They went and sat with the heifer for hours. The sight of its suffering and their own helplessness to do anything to relieve it, convinced them of the truth of what Bapu had said. They, with the rest who had thought like them, withdrew their opposition. Then Seth Ambalal Sarabhai was asked to arrange for the most painless death possible. Accordingly he came personally with his family doctor. Bapu, the dairyman and myself accompanied them to the cowshed, where the heifer was lying. Bapu stooped down and gently held one of its front legs for a few moments. The doctor then gave an injection and all was over. Bapu took a cloth and silently placed it over the heifer's face and we all walked away in silence. For weeks after this, Bapu was bombarded with letters on the subject.

29-10-'28

चि. मीरां,

I have a moment to spare while the vegetables are being made ready for shredding.*

... ...

Chhotelalji's bread is making much headway and cookery is greatly simplified.† But this you will see for yourself when you return.

You will keep yourself in touch with Devadas and the Jamia.

Love,

Bapu

I must not forget to tell you that I have commenced my own carding. I have begun with the medium bow.

Bapu

Shrimati Mirabai,
Khadi Depot,
Muzaffarpur,
Bihar.

* Bapu used to take part in the cutting and shredding of the vegetables for the common kitchen.

† Chhotelalji had successfully built a brickoven and learnt the art of preparing baker's bread without using yeast.

57

Dictated

Satyagraha Ashram
Sabarmati,
31-10-'28

चि. मीरां,

I have your two letters at the same time, one about the Ashram and one describing your Meerut visit. I sent you two letters to the Muzaffarpur address, one on Sunday and the other on Monday.

I don't know how the news about the Ashram appeared in the papers. Anyway most of it is all false. If there was any violent change, I would have surely written to you. I have not dealt with even the change of name in the paper because Mahadeo and others were anxious that I should not even announce change of name in the *Press*. Now, of course, I shall be obliged to do so.* But the committee of the Udyoga Mandir would not relax the rule about *brahmacharya*, so that the fundamental rule about *brahmacharya* and all fundamental rules remain as they were. So does the common kitchen remain a fixture irrevocably for at least one year. At the end of the year only, it is now possible to reconsider the question of the common kitchen in the light of the experience that will be gained. The kitchen is going on merrily.

The Gandhi Ashram people in Meerut want carding demonstration and demonstration of other processes at the time of a fair that is to be held on 21st November. If you are not going to Nepal, it might be well to retrace your

* At this time there was great ferment going on at Sabarmati Ashram. Bapu had put it before the inmates that life in the Ashram was not of such a standard as to justify retention of the name Satyagraha Ashram.

steps and go to this fair and give them what help you can and then proceed to Kashmir. Apart from everything else, I would like you to visit Kashmir and that you will do only while there is some Khadi work going on. And you can take the help of Devadas, Rasik and Navin for arranging the demonstration, in which case it won't be necessary to send anybody from here, and as we are terribly short-handed at the present moment, it will be very inconvenient to send any from the Ashram; yet I am anxious to help the Meerut people. Having known my views, you will do what suits you best. I have not held out any hope to Mazumdar who is the one to write the letter.

With love,

Bapu

Shrimati Miraben,
Muzaffarpur (Bihar).

58

चि. मीरां,

I have your note. This is X-mas eve. If X-mas has a special memory and special meaning for you, may you have on that day a pure and greater grasp of the realities of life. You have a sound heart and therefore all will be well with you. I knew you were happy and at peace in Wardha, and to see you so, made me happy.

Motilalji had work cut out for me as soon as I reached the station. So I was able to spin only at night.

Love,

Bapu

24-12-'28

59

My dear Mira,

You will keep your health and never deny yourself what may be needed for it; nor need you attend the kitchen if the noise there gets on your nerves. In every case, never go beyond your capacity. That too is a breach of truth. And of course, you are not to worry over my being away from you.

No news from this side yet. Vallabhbhai is well. No summons yet for him to go to Poona.

Love,

Bapu

60

[Bapu was at Sabarmati and I was back in Bihar after a visit to Shantiniketan.]

Not revised

14-1-'29
(Silence Day)

चि. मीरां,

I have all your love letters. I am glad indeed that you liked the Poet and his great creation. Your letters soothed me. I have sent them to Mahadeo for I know he will like them. I would like you to go there again and if you will like it, before returning home.

I am satisfied so long as you do not expect long letters from me. But you need not shorten yours to spare me. I like your letters. They give me useful news and they are your temperature chart....

Things are going on well here. The kitchen is better ordered. Bread is almost perfect. Chhotelal has returned with more accurate information about bakeries. Surendra will be back in a few days.

I leave here on 31st inst. for Sindh, returning by 15th February. You shall have the Sindh dates in due course.

I have regained my lost weight and added ½ lb. It was 95½ yesterday. Fruit replaced by tomatoes. No lemon either.

Love,

Bapu

Shrimati Mirabai,
Khadi Depot,
Muzaffarpur,
Bihar.

61

Postcard 2-2-'29

चि. मीरां,

I was detained * by the Sindh people for two days owing to the extraordinary cold. The programme must, therefore, be postdated by two days. Rasik † is lying dangerously ill at Delhi. Ba and Kanti have gone there. He has been unconscious for five days. God's will be done. I return to the Mandir on 15th instant. We are all travelling 3rd class. The closet is wretched, otherwise it is quite all right. Prof. Kripalani is with me.

Love,

Bapu

Shrimati Mirabai,
Khadi Depot,
Chhatwan, ‡
Post Chhotaipati (Bihar).

---

* At Sabarmati.

† Bapu's grandson, younger son of Harilal.

‡ I had started Khadi work in a small village in the north of Bihar, assisted by Ramadevbabu and a few young boys from Rajendra Babu's Ashram at Muzaffarpur.

62

चि. मीरां,

I have been awake quite by accident since 3 a.m. It is now nearing 5 a.m. and I have nearly finished the U. M. post.

I travelled 3rd class again without any mishap and without any discomfort worth the name. And it added to my mental peace. I am never at peace with myself travelling 2nd class.

There is no more news to give you about Rasik. There was no wire awaiting me at Karachi and today I shall get nothing before this is posted. The post closes at 9 a.m.

Did I tell you that last week it was so cold at the U. M. that the water in the buckets and the little reservoir had frozen. The thermometer registered 28 degrees — an unheard of temperature for Sabarmati. We had a most magnificent crop of vegetables, cotton etc. Poor Somabhai had given his whole soul to the thing. Well, practically all was destroyed by the terrible frost, even the beautiful papaiya orchard gone. The whole field looked like weeping. It was an unbearable sight. And yet behind this tragedy Nature has a kindly purpose which we cannot perceive, but believe in full faith. Yes, faith is evidence of things unseen and unseeable.

I hope you have now completely regained your normal health. You will — won't you — recognize the limitations of your body and insist on having the things it may need for its upkeep, even as a trustee would be bound to secure the wellbeing of his ward. Be sure that you do not pamper the body, that you are treating as a trust from God to be

used for your unfoldment and you will be justified, nay bound, to supply its primary wants.

... ...

Love,

4-2-'29

Bapu

Of course, you have read my article about the European visit. Do you not agree ? You will write to Rolland.

Bapu

Shrimati Mirabai,
Bihar.

63

Jacobabad

चि. मीरां,

I have got all your letters. And they are all good. Your last letter dated 2nd inst. gives me an account of your doings up-to-date. It is a splendid arrangement. Only you must not break under the strain. Do not over-do it. If you can stand all the rigid programme commencing from 3-45 a.m. nothing can be better. But if you find it too taxing, do not please hesitate to revise it and make it easier.

... ...

Rasik seems to be sinking. He is still lingering unconscious and helpless. It is terrible. Devadas is the hero in the tragedy. He is nursing him and managing those that have gone to Delhi merely to watch. For now Rasik's aunt has gone there. She dotes on Harilal's children.

I am keeping well bearing the strain without difficulty. Of course, non-milk diet continues. I take oranges in the

journeyings, but otherwise the food is as at Sabarmati. The cold is bearable.

Love,

7-2-'29

Bapu

Shrimati Mirabai,
Bihar.

64

चि. मीरां,

Have just had a wire saying Rasik passed away yesterday. God's will is our law. My day's work goes on uninterrupted. Whatever I feel is felt from selfishness. I had built so much on Rasik doing much in the present body. But that was not to be. Rasik's soul has gone to a higher state. Such was his transformation during the past two months.

I reach Hyderabad on Wednesday. I leave it on Friday morning, pass the day at Mirpurkhas, and entrain in the evening for Delhi, not for Sabarmati. Motilalji wants me there for a day or two. I hope to reach the Mandir on Tuesday night. But I do not know. Better send anything you want to, between Sunday and Tuesday c/o Pandit Motilal Nehru, Clive Street, New Delhi.

No time to give you more just now. Your letters continue to be good and informing. I am purposely refraining from sending you a wire about Rasik. Let us work.

Love,

Larkhana,

9-2-'29

Bapu

Shrimati Mirabai,
Bihar.

65

चि. मीरां,

I have all your letters. I am writing this in New Delhi. I leave tomorrow for the Mandir and leave the Mandir probably on 1st March for Rangoon, returning to Sabarmati about 27th March. Burma address : 8, Pagoda Road, Rangoon, c/o Dr. Mehta.

Your letters are all most consoling. Your work is evidently prospering. When you think that you can speak with some degree of certainty, I would like to publish an account in Y. I. But I am in no hurry. You will report to me your progress about soft spindles. I discussed the thing with Keshu and he was unconvinced. It would be a good thing if all the inmates learn the *habit* of keeping Ashram hours.

Dr. Ansari is amazed at the success that has hitherto attended my diet experiment. He is indifferent about the weight, if I do not decrease.

Devadas has borne the grief wonderfully. Ba and Kanti are still here. Probably they accompany me tomorrow.

Love,

Bapu

18-2-'29

P. S.

Yes, you have to hurry up with corrections of the *Autobiography*. Andrews is now in New York and so is Gregg.

Bapu

Shrimati Mirabai,
The Ashram,
Chhatwan,
Post Chhotaipati (Bihar).

66

चि. मीरां,

I daily receive your instructive letters. Your work bears the promise of a big future. It is good that you are working along the line of least resistance. The introduction of Yogendrababu's wife makes your miniature Ashram a good model to work upon.

. . . .

Love,

Bapu

Monday, 25-2-'29

Shrimati Mirabai,
Ashram, Chhatwan,
Post Chhotaipati (Bihar).

67

Unrevised

Calcutta,
4th March '29

चि. मीरां,

This sheet tells you where I am writing from.

Tomorrow takes me away from you for a fair distance. My third class travelling is becoming a fraud in a way. From Delhi I had a whole compartment given to me and the party. There was thus greater freedom than in the 2nd class and I had the satisfaction of having the whole company with me. The separation pained me. The being together gives me joy.

The Mandir is making visible progress, so I fancy. The joint kitchen is becoming more and more popular, and I do not think, at the end of the year, anybody would want to break it up. But let us see.

Do not be anxious about me. There are three services from Rangoon per week. I hope to write to you therefore three times a week. . . .

You will not forget to give me a summary of your work after sometime now. I want your formed opinion on the soft spindles and a description of your improvements on the bow, also your digest of comparison between the results of well-carded slivers and what they used to have before. I hope you are keeping a diary of these bare experiences. I want you to treat the experiment scientifically.

I want you also to tell me from time to time all about the morning and the evening prayers and what you sing there. And give me also your final changes about food. I am attaching more and more importance to your experiment, for I know you are accurate about these things, and will not easily deceive yourself.

I am more and more reverting to uncooked food. During the journey I had raw vegetable, chopped up with bread. So bread was the only cooked preparation. Fruit is now becoming a superfluity. Raw green vegetable is proving a perfect and cheap substitute. Cabbage, cauliflower or any *bhaji* serves the purpose. And one needs such a small quantity when you eat the vegetable in a raw state.

Love,

Bapu

Shrimati Mirabai,
Chhatwan,
P. O. Chhotaipati (Bihar).

68

16-3-'29

चि. मीरा,

After this there is only one more mail to send you from Burma. The mail after takes me back to Calcutta. You are doing well in taking a little quinine daily. Use yourself to an occasional fast or semi-fast even when you are feeling well. Omit ghee at times, milk other times. Sometimes take juicy fruits. Thus you are likely to avoid fevers.

I hope to collect here about one lakh of rupees. It won't be a bad sum for Burma to pay during these times of trade depression.

I have often wished you were present during such tours as this. But I know also that what you are doing is far more important. If God grants you health, you will travel to these places yourself, and you will then do it after better equipment. The training and the experience you are gaining will prove invaluable when I am gone.

I have passed on your remarks about soft spindles to Lakshmidas. Your argument does appeal to me. But I constantly ask myself, 'why then did Maganlal, who had started with soft spindles, resort to the hard ones? Why has not Lakshmidas noted what you have?' But, of course, these are no reasons for discounting your discovery. They are reasons for the necessity of utmost caution.

I note too your remarks about keeping women in the Ashram. You will, in all these matters, go as slowly as you like, and never attempt anything about which you have yourself no confidence or have even a doubt. 'Slow but sure wins the race.'

Andrews is still in America. Gregg tells me he is doing well. . . . A. is to abbreviate the *Autobiography* for the Macmillan Coy.

Love,

Bapu

Shrimati Mirabai,
Chhatwan,
Post Chhotaipati (Bihar).

69

Unrevised

चि. मीरां,

Today is the silence day and I am writing under the shadow of the fort where one of India's greatest of sons, Tilak, was buried alive. Lalaji * too was buried in the Mandalay fort for years.† Though then I am writing this on the silence day, I was unable to catch the post. I was too sleepy towards post time. But I gave you a letter by the mail that left on Saturday. This letter will leave by the same mail that will take me to Calcutta.

Today is the day for receiving the Indian post in Rangoon. If there is any from you, I should get it at Rangoon on Wednesday, when I reach there.

This interesting tour is drawing to a close. I shall feel the parting with Dr. Mehta. I see that I can comfort him if I am there. But this is a private privilege I may not enjoy.

I have kept well during the tour, though it has needed adjusting. The digestive apparatus does not respond as during bracing cold weather. The climate here is naturally damp.

---

* Lala Lajpat Rai.

† Bapu was getting sleepy and wrote years instead of months.

You know now the rest of the programme. I shall think of sending you a wire on 26th. I shall make a desperate effort to leave by the Express, which leaves Howrah at 2 p.m.

I did good carding today for the first time during the tour. I shall love to do it daily. . . .

No more now as I must be off to a meeting.

Love,

Yours,
Bapu

Mandalay,
18-3-'29

Shrimati Mirabai,
Bihar.

70

Unrevised

चि. मीरां,

We are nearing Calcutta. I am writing this after the evening meal of 23rd. I have had real deck experience only this time. Last time they had isolated me and insisted upon my using 2nd class bath room. I am going to describe the experience in Y. I.

Milkless diet is still serving me.

. . . .

The collections in Burma have been good over $1\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs.

I expect many letters from you tomorrow. I hope to see Rajendra Babu tomorrow.

Surendra is making headway with his tannery. He is steadily gaining experience....

... ...

Love,

23-3-'29

Bapu

On Board
S. S. Aronda.

Shrimati Mirabai,
Bihar.

71

Morvi,
1st April 1929

चि. मीरां,

... ...

I am glad you are extending the building. If you have a large number staying with you, you are bound to have more accommodation.

Always omit food when there is the slightest derangement in the digestive apparatus. Never mind the weakness. Strength will return when you are able to take food. But food itself will cause weakness, when the system cannot assimilate it.

Love,

Bapu

Shrimati Mirabai,
Chhatwan Ashram,
P. O. Chhotaipati,
Bihar.

72

Dictated

Sabarmati,
3-4-'29

चि. मीरां,

I have your further letters. I am glad you are having all the patients coming to you for help. You know what to do. This I write to put you on the right track about drugs. Even castor oil and liquorice powder are expensive things for Indian villages. There are indigenous drugs which you should use instead of liquorice powder made in England or Germany. You should use liquorice itself. It is quite effective and obtainable in every village. You get it in the form of a stick and get the gummy substance from the stick. A tola of this has simply to be mixed with a little warm milk and administered at the time of retiring to bed or better still, at 4 o'clock in the morning, and patients get a clean motion. This is cheap. It can be administered in water also. Then there are the *Sena* leaves, cheaper even than liquorice, obtainable everywhere. You can give *Sena* leaves in powdered form or as an infusion. You can get hold of physicians who are somewhat honest and good, and get through their aid, these very simple drugs. There is only one thing which, I fear, you will have to keep, and that is quinine for malarial cases. But all this is by the way. I don't want to tax you unnecessarily, and you may not wish to distract your attention by having to give your time to a study of these drugs, however superficial that study may be. You will, therefore, use your own judgement, and do what you may consider is feasible.

Love,

Bapu

Shrimati Miraben,
Bihar.

73

Hyderabad (Deccan),
7-4-1929

चि. मीरां,

I had your letter in Bombay. Your letter sent to Bezwada has been redirected here at Hyderabad, which I leave this evening.

Your last letter is disturbing. You continue to get fever periodically. Do not be anxious about it, but do not disregard it. If you cannot keep your health there, you must take a change. It might be good to take quinine for some days. Lemons you should send for from Patna or Calcutta, wherever they are to be had.

I hope you are using the mosquito-net regularly. If oil disagrees, do not take it. If you cannot get good ghee, I can send it to you. In short, you should hold your body in trust and take whatever may be needed for it.

Yes, for the soft spindles, you have no advocate in Gujarat barring me. But if my advocacy is based on ignorance, I advocate it because I like it.

Visitors waiting to see me.

I am under Mrs. Naidu's roof.

Love,

Bapu

Shrimati Miraben,
Chhatwan Ashram,
P. O. Chhotaipati,
Bihar.

74

8-4-'29

चि. मीरां,

I sent you a letter yesterday from Hyderabad (Deccan). I am nearing Bezwada, but still away from it. We are in a little village without a telegraphic office. The post from Bezwada has been brought here. So I have two letters from you, 2nd and 3rd. If you cannot be radically cured, you must take a change. You can go to a seaside or to a hillside.

If you can hold out till June, you might perhaps go with me to Almora. So far as I am aware, there is to be an Almora programme in June. You will have to travel 2nd class though, I should dread to put you in a 3rd class compartment in your weak state.* But this is all building castles in the air. The immediate thing is for you to get well. To spend lavishly on fruit is real economy. You cannot keep good health without fresh fruit. Lemons are the prince among fruits. Dr. Rajabali told me, one lemon was equal to six oranges. I can well believe it. But you must have all the fruit you fancy. Raw green leaf is good, but it must be eaten sparingly, not more than one tola at a time and then too only if it does not upset the system. Perhaps the oil too does not agree with you. Your primary concern is not to discover a cheap diet, but it is to be able to live in villages without needing a yearly exodus to the hills. Your attention must, therefore, be concentrated on making your experiment a success, no matter how much it costs you to live. I am going to wire to you as soon as I

---

* I had a bad attack of Malaria. There was a regular epidemic in the village and practically not a house without one or two inmates down with fever.

am at a wiring station. How nice it is to be without a wiring office at either end ! I know that I need not wire. If I was really poor, I could not wire. If I was not impatient and had full trust in God, I should not wire. But I am not going to act mechanically. When that faith comes, I shall cease to think of wiring. It is enough for the time being that I am not fretting, even though I get letters about your illness and though I have no telegraph office here.

I seem to be flourishing on my diet, 3rd class travelling and continuous engagements. I wonder myself that I have not yet collapsed. Of course, I snatch plenty of rest and the happy knack of sleeping at will saves me. Truth is that God saves me so long as He wants me in this body. The moment His wants are satisfied, no precautions on my part will save me.

Of course, you will locate Bezwada on the map. There are five or six districts to cover.

Love,

Bapu

Shrimati Mirabai,
Bihar.

75

चि. मीरां,

I wrote to you yesterday. I have wired today a fairly full thing. I am happy you are out of the wood just now. But these attacks are a warning you may not ignore.

Yes, I did get the translation of Rolland's letter in Ahmedabad, I think, certainly not in Calcutta. I hope to send you a reply for despatch with translation.

You will not put an undue strain on your body or your nerves.

I am still unable to give you a settled programme. The Reception Committee is still undecided as to the places to which it will take me. The headquarters, therefore, remain Bezwada.

Love,

Bapu

9-4-'29

You missed the fast on 6th because of your fever. I missed it because of my wretched preoccupation, though I had thought of it before. The rush is bad. This forgetfulness is a bad symptom.

Shrimati Mirabai,
Bihar.

76

Postcard

चि. मीरां,

I have your letter. As there is no wire, I take it that the slight increase was a passing phase only. Beware of overstrain. I am still keeping well.

Love,

10-4-'29

Bapu

Shrimati Mirabai,
Bihar.

77

चि. मीरां,

I constantly think of you. This leanness of body won't do. You must have enough flesh on you to support your big frame. But, of course, there is no hurry. Do insist on having a room to yourself, where you can shut yourself in, if you like.

Love,

12-4-'29 Bapu

Shrimati Mirabai,
Bihar.

78

चि. मीरां,

I have your two letters. You have my promise that if anything happens to me, you shall know by wire. You must, therefore, reject all canards as baseless unless confirmed by me.

Your duty is to rebuild your body and make it invulnerable, if it is at all possible. But no anxiety even on this score.

The condition of the people as described by you is nothing new for me. But you are now understanding my impatience about their condition.

No more today. Headquarters still Bezwada.

Love,

15-4-'29 Bapu

I am today in Masulipatam.

Shrimati Mirabai,
Chhatwan, Bihar.

79

20-4-'29

Telegram

Mirabai, Khadi Depot, Madhubani.

Your wire If weakness persists you must retire at once Ambalal's Factory or such other place as may be advisable Consult Rajendrababu or Lakshmibabu if former unavailable Report final decision Bezwada.

Bapu

80

चि. मीरां,

. . . .

It is unfortunate that you have to break up the Ashram * before it has taken root. But you can't work against your natural limitations. The seed sown will bear fruit. You must not wear yourself out. More we shall discuss when we meet.

. . . .

Love,

20-4-'29

Bapu

Shrimati Mirabai,
C/o Babu Rajendraprasad,
P. O. Zeradai (Bihar).

81

Telegram

25-4-'29

Mirabai, Khadi Depot, Muzaffarpur.

Glad you have freed yourself Ashram worry Are you going Ambalal's Factory Wire reply Banuku

Bapu

---

* Chhatwan Centre.

82

Dictated Tuni, 2nd May 1929

चि. मीरां,

I have not been able recently to write to you as I should like to. The spare time at my disposal, I have been utilizing for overtaking arrears.

I enclose herewith my letter to Rolland. Please translate and send, unless you want me to revise the original.

I hope you have now my detailed programme and you know exactly where I am from day to day up to the 28th inst. I am anxiously awaiting something from you from Muzaffarpur. I want to make sure that you are definitely on the road to recovering your strength.

Love,

Bapu

Shrimati Miraben,
Care Khadi Depot,
Muzaffarpur.

83

चि. मीरां,

I have your letter and your wire. It distresses me to have to send you 'no' for my answer. I am rarely for two nights at one place. The heat is daily increasing. There is no rest, no adequate arrangement for food except for me. And as I do not take milk, there is rarely good milk obtainable. There are no oranges as I have cut down my fruit requirement. In this state to bring you here in your present condition is too great a risk and too great a strain on

the Reception Committee, which has to find motor accommodation. The most strenuous part of the tour commences from Nellore. I cannot procure for you all the comforts I must give you, without putting an undue strain on everybody about me. I am sure you do not want to do this. You will, therefore, hold yourself in patience till 23rd May, after which I shall gladly take charge of you. This does not mean that I am myself put to any inconvenience. So many look after me and what is more, I insist on my requirements being met. I have to, if I am to finish the tour without collapsing. You need not, therefore, feel the slightest anxiety about me. I am in first class health. But I am a big enough morsel for the people. Now all are waiting for me to be ready for the journey.

Love,

5-30 A. M.

5-5-'29

Bapu

Shrimati Mirabai,
Khadi Depot,
Muzaffarpur, Bihar.

84

Postcard

चि. मीरां,

I am in an out of the way place under the Punkha. But the wind itself is blowing hot. And we have to start off at 5-30 on an 80-mile journey. Imam Saheb has nearly collapsed. He is dragging on. Prabhavati too is feeling the heat. I am praying that during these last ten days, we may be able to pull through. I hope you have got over the shock of detention. The meeting in Bombay will be all the more precious. I am personally first class, because I insist on what I need.

Love,

Bapu

11-5-'29

Shrimati Mirabai,
Sadaquat Ashram,
Dighaghat P. O.,
Patna.

85

चि. मीरां,

I do hope you got the detailed programme that was sent to you. There is no letter from you today. I hope you have plenty of congenial work at the Vidyapith.

I want your criticism on my article in reply to De Ligt's second open letter, which has been published in Y. I. I have made a change in my diet, which I do not describe, as we shall soon meet. The change has been made purely by way of experiment, as I like it, and as I have met a man who knows all about it. Of course, there is nothing to worry about in this. If it does not agree with me, I shall give it up.

Love,

Nellore,

13-5-'29

Bapu

Shrimati Mirabai,
Sadaquat Ashram,
Patna (Bihar).

86

[Again anxiety over Bapu's health, owing to the terrific strain of his work, had become too much for me, and I had rushed to him, and again, I had received a scolding, which in its turn, always broke my heart.]

Unrevised

चि. मीरां,

Our train being two hours late, the whole of the programme was upset. It was somewhat set right by my foregoing the afternoon rest, and putting off the bath for the

night station. I finished spinning at 9-30. It is now nearly 10 p.m. But I may not retire before writing this.

The foregoing preface is to show you, I have been thinking of you the whole day long. Now that you are away from me, my grief over having grieved you is greater. No tyrant has yet lived, who has not paid for the suffering he has caused. No lover has ever given pain without being more pained. Such is my state. What I have done was inevitable. Only I wish I did not lose temper. But such is my brutality towards those I love most. But now that you are away from me, I can think of nothing but your extraordinary devotion. May God remove what I consider is your मोह or may He open the eyes of my understanding, and let me see my error.

You are to keep well.

Love,

Bapu

Banda,

20-11-'29

Shrimati Miraben,
Sadaquat Ashram,
Patna.

87

चि. मीरां,

I have your three letters. My weight was found to be $100\frac{1}{2}$ lb. Your last entry * shows 89 lb. 15 tolas. The increase is therefore 11 lb. nett. Not a bad bargain ! Otherwise too all well.

Love,

Bapu

Sabarmati,
26-11-'29

Shrimati Mirabai,
Khadi Bhandar,
Madhubani,
Bihar.

88

[Between the last letter and this, there came a never-to-be-forgotten period in Sabarmati Ashram. Bapu devoted all his time and energy to an intensive preparation of us all for the coming national struggle, which now, had become inevitable. The Ashram reached its zenith in physical energy and moral strength. Every morning and evening Bapu spoke in the prayers, and an atmosphere of uplifting inspiration filled the air. This letter was written the day after Bapu had left the Ashram on the famous Dandi March, in order to prepare salt on the seashore, and so launch the Salt Satyagraha campaign. The demonstration of non-violence to which Bapu refers, was the enormous crowd of thousands upon thousands of men, women and children, who came out of Ahmedabad overnight and kept vigil all round the Ashram till morning. Rumours were continually flying round that the Government had decided to arrest Bapu. But not even the British Government would have cared to arrest him in the midst of that vast multitude of devotees. I think Bapu was the only person who slept that night, and he rested in that sweet sleep which never failed him. The next morning

* In the register which I used to keep of Bapu's weight.

when Bapu set out with his little band of followers on the march, this vast mass of humanity marched with him for many miles.]

—

चि. मीरां,

Whilst there is time,* you should write and that fully or as fully as time permits. Yesterday's demonstration was a triumph of non-violence. I know it won't be everywhere and always like that during the struggle, but it was a great and good beginning.

You will be patient, anxious for nothing, charitable towards those who do not do as you would have them do. Your central work is women and children.

See that Reginald † takes care of himself and is not rash.

Everything must be in apple pie order.

Your diary will be fully kept.

And you will not be anxious about me. He will keep me fit so long as He needs me.

With love,

Bapu

13-3-'30

---

* Before Bapu's hourly expected arrest.

† Reginald Reynolds.

89

चि. मीरां,

I have your letter and the flowers that were struggling to find me out. My fatigue so far seems to be health-giving. For, it enables me to take milk twice instead of once and plenty of fruit. Today the fatigue of the past five days made me sleep five times during the day. I hope to find myself thoroughly fit to undertake the ensuing week's march or whatever else may be in store for me. So you will not worry about me. I see you are now finding yourself there. The struggle has been a veritable godsend for all of us. It is, as it should be, a process of cleansing. Let us never be slack.

Love,

March 17th, 1930

Bapu

90

चि. मीरां,

. . . .

You will see a paragraph I have devoted to you in Y. I.

Give me your latest time table. . . .Is the women's prayer recited daily ?

I am taking my journeyings very well indeed. But over 15 have become disabled. They expect to be all right by tomorrow. They are all in Broach, which we reach tomorrow morning.

I am feeling sleepy now.

Love,

Trelsa,
25-3-'30

Bapu

91

चि. मीरां,

... ...

My health seems to be excellent. I have put on 2 lb. weight. All have. We were weighed in Broach.

Love,

Bapu

92

चि. मीरां,

I hate writing letters in pencil. But I am writing this whilst I am waiting at the prayer ground for the others to come. It is just nearing 4-20.

... ...

How is Reginald getting on now ?

I am moving from place to place and concentrating on spinning. Boycott of foreign cloth will be a trap without spinning. And *takli* * is the only thing to make spinning universal. You will, therefore, do there whatever is possible to manufacture more *khadi*.

I am sending you a cutting regarding yourself.

Love,

Bapu

21-4-'30

The ink portion was written after prayer.

---

* Hand spindle.

93

चि. मीरां,

I have your letter only just now with the post that brings me the news about Mahadev.

. . . .

I am conceiving the last move that must compel decisive action. But it is all in God's hands.

Love,

Bapu

94

My dear Mira,

Just one line to acknowledge your long love letter. It is now nearing 10 p.m, so good night for the time being.

Love,

Bapu

Silence day or night ? Silence breaks at midnight.

[The arrest has come.]

चि. मीरां,

Yours is the first letter I take up to write from the jail, and that on the silence day.

I have been quite happy and have been making up for arrears of rest. The nights here are cool and as I am permitted to sleep right under the sky, I have refreshing sleep. About the change made in the manner of taking the diet, you will learn from my general letter.

It was a great treat to receive the wheel so thoughtfully sent and with things so carefully packed in it. The carding bow, the Superintendent tells me, was lost on the way by the friends who brought it. I am in no hurry for it, as you have sent me a liberal quantity of slivers.

. . .I am giving as much time as I can to the *takli*. I find that I have no speed on it at all. I hardly get thirty rounds in one hour. For the first day I gave nearly seven hours to reach 160 rounds. I was washed out at the end of the performance. I must learn the trick of getting more speed. . . .

I hope you had good news from mother about her health and otherwise.

The prison officials are all kind and attentive.

Love,

Bapu

Yeravda,

12-5-'30

I believe it will be possible for me to receive the Ashram post. You may, therefore, send a weekly letter together with the Ashram post.

Unrevised

चि. मीरां,

You must be in possession of my last silence day letter. It was posted only on Friday, I fear. This should go earlier. It is now after 8 p.m. Sunday. I take silence at 3 p.m. on Sundays as a rule.

Of my life here, you will learn from my general letter. I have more than doubled the quantity of yarn spun. It is nearly 400 rounds on the wheel and 55 to 60 on the *takli*. It is all well moistened and properly packed. For the wheel yarn it is 5 strands of 75 rounds put together daily. The *takli* yarn is one strand of nearly 160 rounds. It will be interesting to know what strength I am spinning. The whole performance takes up 6 hours daily. I do not grudge the time. I am not doing much reading this time. Nor do I want to collect a lot of books as I did last time. I should like to perfect my spinning, if I can. Presently I shall have to card. I observe, I have still 10 days' supply of slivers. . . .

And how is Reginald getting on ? How is he taking the heat ? My love to him. In your weekly letter you may give all the news that is not political.

I think I told you last time that I had started translating the verses and hymns in the hymn book. I am nearing the end of the morning verses.

I hope you are keeping perfect health. You will not overstrain yourself on any account.

Love,

18-5-'30

Bapu

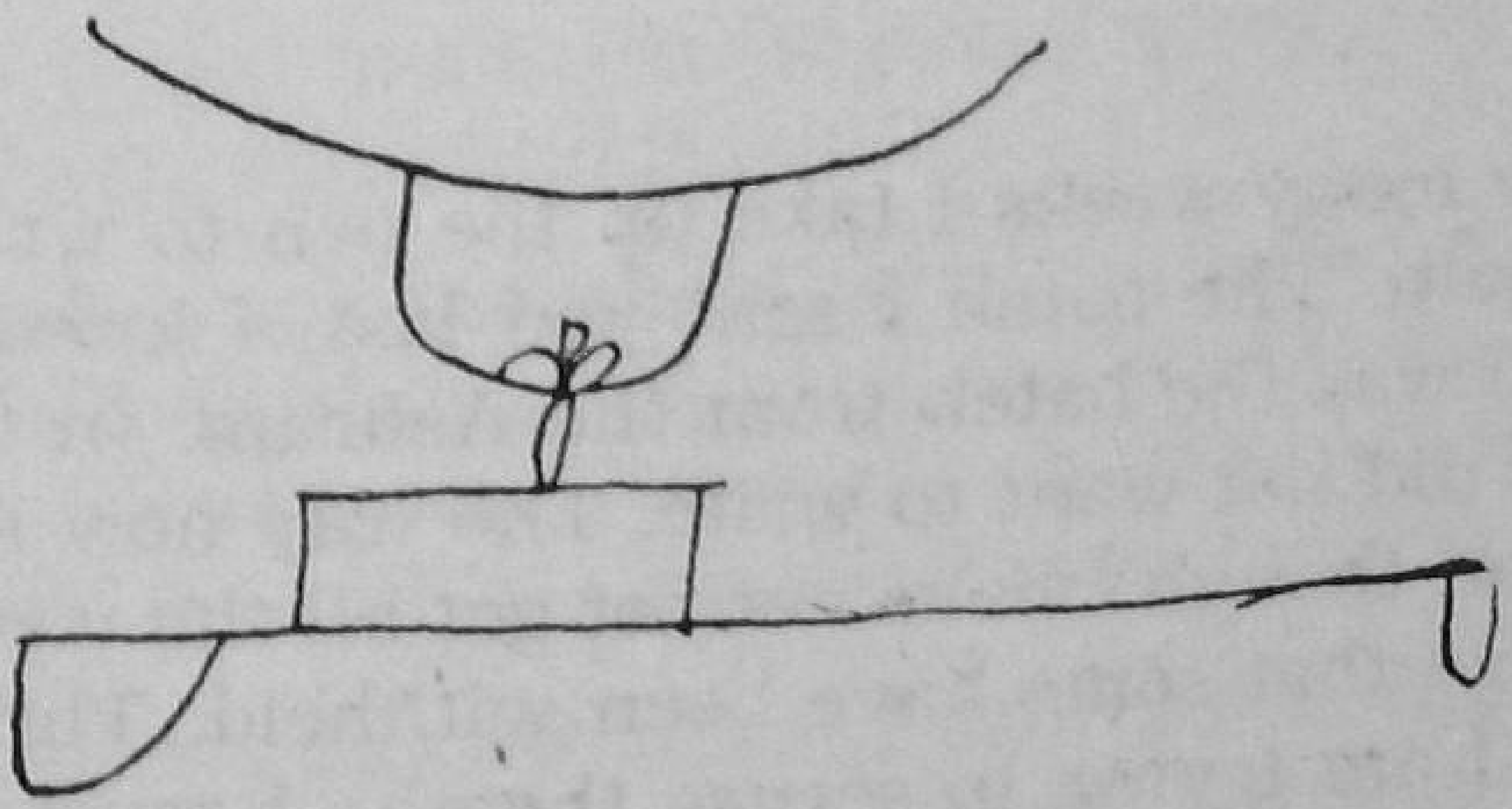
97

चि. मीरां,

Again I commence this on Sunday after the silence and after the evening prayer.

When you came, time seemed to be running against us. I therefore simply allowed you all to talk instead of myself talking and asking a lot of questions. You were not at all looking well. You seemed to have been pulled down. That won't do. You must take proper exercise and proper food. You must take all the fruit you may need and keep yourself fit.

I realize now as never before how careless I was not to have mastered the details about arranging the large bow. As I have some mechanical ability, I have suspended it and have already been working at it since Thursday last and have a fair stock of *punis*, but there is something wrong about it. The long cord hangs from the roof. There are two strings hanging from the bamboo. I have joined the two and I pass the thin cord over the joined strings thus :



The bamboo work does not stand steady but is inclined to turn round and round. Of course, the wall prevents it. But I fancy that it should not turn at all even if there was no wall preventing it. If you have understood what I have described and if there is any flaw, you will tell me.

Your *takli* is well made, but is too heavy for fine spinning. I have no doubt that the bamboo is the thing. My speed is better now. I have done 65 rounds today in 1½ hours — not bad for me. I would do better when I shed my nervousness and draw the thread without fearing to break it.

My translation of one verse per day from the prayer book continues. I wish I could do more. But the spinning and carding won't leave me any more time. And now I must make time for the sewing machine. I was glad you came.

Love,

Bapu

25-5-'30

Yeravda Pleasure House.

How do you make rigid the little wheel * on the spindle when it gets loose ?

98

Unrevised

चि. मीरां,

After many weeks I take up the pen to write Ashram letters again. The batch I sent you last, I knew, was held up and so was the batch from the Ashram. In the circumstances, I did not want to write. The way now seems to be fairly clear, though I have not yet got all the weekly letters and I know that some have been withheld. They are from children. I am trying to secure them — I must have some reminders now and then at least of prison life.

No visits can be entertained so long as the difficulty remains as it does, unremoved. If visits cannot be had on

* Pulley.

honourable terms, we must be content with writing letters if they can be honourably continued. If therefore you do not hear from me regularly, know that I am a prisoner. If I am really ill, walls will speak. The authorities will themselves proclaim it as they did last time and you could always inquire from them whenever you hear rumours, and I expect they will promptly give you the information. But I am hoping that there will be plain sailing so far as letter writing is concerned. Just at present there is nothing wrong with me save for a trifling constipation. There is no cause for any anxiety whatsoever.

I have your latest letter i.e., of the 9th inst. Nothing since. The instructions you give me about the bow are quite good and quite enough. Yet I have hung it the wrong way up, but it has worked with perfect smoothness. The bow itself has not required any attention. I have finished carding all the cotton I had. The gut has not given in at all as yet. I used not *neem* leaves, but leaves of some other tree resembling the tamarind. They are quite serviceable. You may send two pounds of cotton per anyone who may be going to Poona. There is no hurry. I have slivers enough to last till 15th July at least. I need not touch the bow till then. When I do, I shall rearrange the apparatus in accordance with your instructions.

About adjusting the wheel on the spindle too, I understand. But here again nature has been kind to me. I adjusted the wheel in my own way and it has remained quite fixed. If there is trouble, I shall try your prescription.

I note all you say about your own work. You shall act just as God leads you and your strength permits. May God bless you. More from the general letter.

Love,

Bapu

22-6-'30

99

Unrevised

चि. मीरां,

I have your letter.

I think the Ashram letters will be now regularly received by me and mine by you all. The condition is that no politics can be discussed on either side. But if you find again an interruption, you will infer that some hitch has occurred.

I am glad you are keeping fit. Only your weight must not go below a minimum which, for your build, must be 116.

Yes, I am doing some sewing regularly. Of course, it is all jail work. When Mathuradas suggested it for cheapening *khadi*, I was attracted to the suggestion. I thought I would practise on the machine here. . . .

As I am not likely to have visitors now, it would be better to send me 3 lb. of cotton. . . .Kakasaheb too will need slivers. You may pack the cotton in paper and then sew it up in sacking. This suggestion is made to save *khadi*.

My love to all the friends.

Love,

Bapu

Y. M.
30-6-'30

100

चि. मीरां,

I have your letter given to me intact and in good time. There is not likely to be any difficulty now in the early delivery of letters on either side.

I am glad you have good news from London. It was evidently a thoroughly successful operation.* The West has always commanded my admiration for its surgical inventions and all-round progress in that direction.

In your menu you do not tell me how much ghee you are taking and whether you are taking oranges or not. Ghee you need and so also oranges. I would like you not to cut off or reduce these two things.

If you have not sent cotton as yet, it should now be sent at once. I have told you 15th July is the last day.

I am keeping well. I find the doing of 375 rounds somewhat of a strain nowadays. I am trying to probe the cause. That being so, the *takli* practice has slowed down considerably.

I have complaints about the non-appearance of extracts from my letters. You may, therefore, resume publishing extracts of a general character. I have discussed this with the Superintendent. The people will be intensely dissatisfied if they see nothing from my letters.

Nothing yet settled about interviews.

My love to all those to whom I do not write but of whom I constantly think.

Love,

Bapu

Y. M.,
7-7-'30

* My mother had undergone an operation.

101

[I had prepared a wheel on the Bihar pattern and taken it to Yeravda Jail, as I knew, it would be difficult for Bapu to understand the method of fitting it, if I did not explain it personally. But this proved not to be possible, and Bapu sent to me the following note in the Superintendent's office.]

चि. मीरां,

It hurts me but I must deny myself this pleasure, if I am to be consistent with myself. Please leave the wheel, etc. and I shall manage the best way I can. It is on such occasions that we test ourselves.

God be with you.

Love,

Bapu

102

Unrevised

चि. मीरां,

It pained me to have to refuse to see you. But the proof of my having done the right thing came the next morning. The Government have rejected my offer and therefore there can be no interviews now. It would be unbecoming for me to press my view-point. They are entitled to refuse every facility to prisoners as was done all the world over only a century ago or even much later. It is enough that the exchange of letters is permitted. But you will recognize that even this is a precarious thing. Any moment they may stop the correspondence or impose unacceptable conditions. We can only gain by self-denial. Therefore there need be

no heart-burning over this stoppage of interviews. It is better that spirit meets spirit. No power on earth can stop that blessed contact.

Now for the gifts you left. I note the extraordinary care over the smallest detail. I began the use of the new wheel immediately. This therefore was the second day of use. Today is Sunday after the commencement of silence. But whilst this love is deep, it is not as wise as it might be. Your wheel has not lessened the strain. As I explained to Mathuradas, the strain was in the having to sit out for five hours in practically one posture. If I could reduce the hours and get the same amount of production, it would be another matter. That the new wheel is not likely to do. As it is, the strain on the left arm is felt in using the new wheel. For, in this you have to move the arm away from you and raise it too. Whereas in the box wheel, the arm is in a horizontal position and moves towards oneself. Moreover you could ill-afford to give time to a matter like this and take up that of skilled workmen unless it is required by me. I must be allowed to be capable of looking after myself and expressing my wants. Thirdly, I have not yet been able to draw as fine a thread as on the box wheel. The result is the use of 50% more slivers — a national waste! Enough however of criticism. I am not going lightly to leave aside a thing that has come charged with so much love. I am, therefore, going to continue the use of the wheel and report to you from time to time. What oil do you use for the holders and the axle? How often do you apply the resin to the *mal*?

The *taklis* I have tried. They are not as good as the one I have made here. The discs are too large, the bamboo not well polished. There seems to be a proportion between the thickness of the rod and the circumference of the disc. If weight is wanting, it must be made up by making the

disc thicker. Next time you make a *takli*, you will consider these points and let me know your opinion.

There is nothing new to report about my health. The weight keeps steady.

You will please take no liberties with your body during the tour.*

I am putting in more time for the translation of the *bhajans*. I have finished the Sanskrit verses and am now on the *bhajans*. . . .

Love,

Y. M. Bapu

20-7-'30

103

चि. मीरां,

I have your letter. I am sticking to your wheel.

It is now causing less strain. The *mal* has not given any trouble at all. In that respect yours is a better wheel. I have still difficulty in getting the required fineness. Anyway, I shall not easily let it go. The speed is still poor. To-day for the first time I got 154 rounds in 65 minutes. This was encouraging for me. On the travelling wheel I had reached 200 rounds per hour when the machine went on without a break.

In translating the hymns for you I am giving myself much joy. Have I not expressed my love oftener in storms than in gentle soothing showers of affection ? The memory of these storms adds to the pleasure of this exclusive translation for you. But it is a long affair. I did the 10th hymn

* I was starting out on an all-India Khadi tour.

today. The verses took me a long time. The hymns I am doing one per day. And I have still nearly 170 to do ! There is, therefore, not much likelihood of my reaching the *Gita* just yet.

Your fever is disturbing. You are still sensitive to changes. Do please take care of yourself and don't hesitate to travel 2nd if you find it at all necessary. I am looking forward to this week's letter.

Love,

Bapu

27th July 1930

104

चि. मीरां,

I want to be brief this week. There is no special reason for it. As a matter of fact the general letter is long enough.

I do hope your health has kept quite good throughout the travel.

. . . .

The wheel has worked better. I reached today more than 160 rounds in an hour. I have rearranged the bow and it works better. I realize more and more that good slivers are indispensable for gaining speed in spinning. It is wonderful how attention to every detail counts.

Health keeps all right.

Love,

Bapu

Y. M.

4-8-'30

105

चि. मीरां,

I have your love letter from Patna. Your experiences are valuable. I hope that the symptoms of dysentery have disappeared altogether.

I am sticking to the new wheel. The speed is still the same. But I am not going to give it up. It is a precious possession.

The translation of the hymns is going on with clock-work regularity, but I have not been able to give them more time. The time limit therefore remains as I said in one of my letters.

... ...

My weight has gone down by 2 lb. but there is nothing to worry over. The obstinate constipation necessitated reduction in the quantity of milk. I shall pick up if I can revert to the original quantity. It is better to lose weight than to lose health. Energy remains the same. This news is not for publication. I have given it to you for the sake of truth. I am bound to tell you about my health and I may not suppress the fact of the loss of weight.

Love,

Bapu

Y. M.

10-8-'30

106

चि. मीरां,

Your letter though written in a shaky train was wonderfully legible. If you had not drawn my attention, I should not have noticed any difference at all.

I think I have got my control over the travelling wheel and I hope to gain greater speed than now. As it is, I am saving about an hour and there is much less fatigue. But your labour has not gone in vain. Kakasaheb was using the Gandiv.* But it did not give him satisfaction. And he was not able always even to do one unit i.e., 160 rounds. On your wheel he has no difficulty in making one unit in two hours, which is the least he is bound to give to the charkha.

You did the right thing in transferring to the 2nd class. There can be no harm and certainly no shame in going 2nd class when the 3rd is clearly impossible or next to it.

. . . .

Love,

Bapu

* The original from which the modern box charkha has been developed. The box or travelling charkha to which Bapu refers, was a complicated affair with a collapsible wire wheel of the upright pattern.

107

चि. मीरां,

I must be briefer even than last week. It is just striking 10-00 p.m. — very unusual for me. And this is the last night if I am to keep time as I must. But there is nothing much to say either.

Yesterday I went back to the travelling wheel. The strain was at once reduced and the output greater for the same time — though not much. But I know that I shall get a greater output on it. I saw that it was a wrong expression of love to persist in using your charkha if it did not fulfil the purpose for which you sent it. Only I did not want to give it up without a full trial. My health is all right, but the weight is still on the down grade. But that is nothing. As soon as constipation is under control, it will go up. I expect a rise this week.

Love,

Y. M. Bapu

18-8-'30

108

चि. मीरां,

I have your love letter written during your journey to Madras. I am hoping that this strain will not prove too much for you. Your descriptions are all valuable. Yes, I had a strenuous time during the Nehrus' * visit. It was

* With a view to reaching a settlement, the Government had sent Pandit Motilal Nehru and Jawaharlalji by special train from the Naini Prison to the Yeravda Prison for a few days' discussion.

with difficulty that I was able to spin 375 rounds, without doing which I should feel most unhappy................
The carding bow is working to perfection. It imposes no strain on me. Kakasaheb rolls the slivers. He has yet to learn carding which he proposes to begin shortly. The translation of the *bhajans* continues as before regularly but slowly and I see no immediate chance of greater output. I am keeping well. The weight fluctuates. Last week I regained one pound out of two or three I seemed to have lost. There has been no loss of energy. The water here is hard and therefore constipation requires a little handling.

Love,

Y. M.

Bapu

24-8-'30

You will be glad to know that the *tant* † has not once broken.

109

चि. मीरां,

Your letter from Tirupur. You now know all about our peace talks ! I have regained the weight I had lost here. I weighed 104 lb. last Friday. I have dropped the dried fruit also. The sour limes remain. I take vegetables in the place of dried fruit. Sweet potatoes and raw tomatoes are standing vegetables. The former are roasted. A green vegetable is boiled — generally it is cabbage or marrow or the like. This change accounts for the restoration of the weight and constipation no longer worries me. If the change proves successful in the long run, the cost is considerably

† The gut on the carding bow.

reduced. Let us see. I have made no hard and fast rule about the avoidance of fruit. But just now it is no deprivation whatsoever and possibly a gain in health.

My mastery over the wheel is increasing. The fatigue is no longer felt. I see that if you concentrate on the *pooni* end whilst the thread is drawing, then on the point of the spindle when the thread is being shifted to the cone and then on the cone when it is brought there, you avoid breakage if the *pooni* is sound. I hope shortly to increase the speed appreciably. It is better even now. But there is much room for improvement. Anyway just now it is the wheel that absorbs my attention to the exclusion of other studies....

I hope you have had some rest somewhere. Do not rush.

Love,

Y. M. Bapu

7-9-'30

110

चि. मीरां,

Your Coimbatore letter before me. It is remarkable how well you have kept on the whole in the midst of the tremendous rush. It is a sign of mental calm I expect. ....I see that the *mal* and its proper adjustment have much to do both with speed and efficient working. I am getting on. I am by no means despondent. The extraordinary fatigue is gone. There need be no anxiety therefore about the wheel. Kaka is at your wheel. He can't yet get more than 80 rounds per hour....

My walks must still be confined. But I am keeping quite well. The wheel and thinking about it make the time fly. And at the end of the day I get good sleep which to me means more than food. I have finished translating the 65th *bhajan*. But there is yet a long distance to cover. I rarely get time to do more than one and I have not yet failed to do one per day. Though, therefore, the progress is steady, it is undoubtedly slow.

Love,

Bapu

Y. M.

14-9-'30

111

चि. मीरां,

I have your Calcutta letter. You are having a variety of experiences.* Seekers after Truth turn every one of these to good account. I hope the little illness you had was but a passing thing and that you were yourself again quickly. I hope you had the rest you wanted. I am daily

* I had arrived in Calcutta with fever on me. At the station a large and excited crowd was waiting, but before anyone could reach me, an

making slight improvements in the travelling wheel and it gives me less and less trouble. It is wonderful what a number of details you have to attend to when you have not a perfected machine, but a contrivance to help the cunning of your hands. But the greater the mastery over the wheel, the greater is the pleasure of spinning and the less the fatigue. Kaka is still struggling with your wheel. He has much past neglect to make up for. As he says, he has become a spinner only here. Before he was spinning, but he was no spinner. You know what I mean. A man can make a table without being a cabinet-maker. The change to vegetables persists. There is no setback nor is there visible further progress. I want to give this experiment a full trial. Dr. Mehta sent word that perhaps sweet potatoes might induce constipation. I have, therefore, dropped them today. Tomatoes are a daily adjunct and a green vegetable.

You will give my love to friends wherever you are.

Love,

Y. M.

Bapu

22-9-'30

English police official pushed his way into the carriage and served me with an order not to join the ladies' procession, which had been arranged for my reception. I explained that I should break the order and he explained that in that case there would be a lathi charge. Both things happened and I was arrested and taken to the Commissioner of Police, Sir Charles Tegart. After about half an hour's talk he released me. In the meantime there had been considerable commotion in the city.

112

चि. मीरां,

I have your letter. You did not get or take even the full four days' rest at Muzaffarpur. Next time I should stick to such promises. Why should rest not be taken in the spirit of service? Of course, it can be easily abused and often is. But that is no reason why honest people may not honestly give themselves rest so as to enable them to keep fit for further service. I regard it as self-delusion if not worse, when a person says he is wearing himself away in service. Is such service preferred by God to service steadily and detachedly performed? Body is like a machine requiring to be well kept for full service. Enough however of sermonizing from a safe retreat. Only I do feel that I have not felt ashamed to take the required rest. That people about me have thought otherwise is because of their ignorance of the laws of rest. Rest properly and in due time taken is like the proverbial timely stitch.

... ...

I want to reach a high standard both in spinning and carding. There is no reason why I should stop at 160 rounds per hour. I have now confidence that I should do better. For me it is God's work. If He wills it, He will give me the strength and the ability....

My weight is between 103 and 104, the food about the same.

Love,

Bapu

28-9-'30

चि. मीरां,

I am writing this after taking silence. Have just seen your portrait in a group published in the *Times Illustrated Weekly*. You are spinning on the *takli* and looking fit. Then I saw in the columns of the *Bombay Chronicle* that you were in the women's procession and spoke at their meeting. So you are again near my lodgings and probably this will be in your hands at the Ashram.

............Where did you stay whilst in Madras?

Last week, Kaka having been given my wheel, I thought I would finish my quota on yours. I tried hard but I could not make it work. The spindle won't turn. Whether the resin was ineffective or what the cause was, I could not divine. But there it was refusing to turn. Then I thought of the Gandiv of Surat. I found it to be an extraordinarily effective thing. For the last two days I have been finishing the whole of my quota on it and that in very good time and without the slightest fatigue. It has captivated me and I want you to try it. It is essentially a poor man's wheel. The inventor is no mechanic. How it has come to him, I do not know. But every part of it, in my opinion, shows solicitude for the starving. It costs Rs. $1\frac{1}{2}$ but it can be made for only 8 annas, I am sure. It is the lightest wheel going in India. It requires the least attention. It occupies the smallest space of all the wheels I know. A little child can work at it. Thousands of these wheels can be manufactured in a day if the discs and spindles are kept in stock. Its mechanism is simplicity personified. You naturally draw a fine thread. The very first I drew was over 30 counts. And I fancy that it can compete with any in giving speed. It admits of certain improvements, which can be made without adding a pice to the cost. I have made two and this reduces the cost. The

original has noisy wooden holders. I have discarded them and put on coir rope picked up from rubbish. I have broken up the jingling glass bars on the spindle and wound a few turns of yarn to hold the spindle in position. This has made it absolutely noiseless. Such is the opinion of a new convert, who has tried it only for the last four days. It may, therefore, need modification. But it is undoubtedly a case for believers to give it a fair trial. I am writing to the inventor suggesting certain improvements and am writing to Keshu too to examine, try, and if my preliminary observation is at all sound, to improve it. There are other merits I must not describe, as I have many more letters yet to write. If you can think of the reason that has prevented the spindle on your wheel from turning, please tell me.

... ...

Both of us are keeping excellent health. My weight, if anything, shows a slight increase. The vegetable experiment seems to have proved a success and it gives me joy to know that the disappearance of even dried fruit reduces the cost very materially. In vegetables, for the last two days, I have been taking spinach which has moved the bowels automatically. I take sweet potatoes off and on. I hope you have by now got all my letters. I have missed no week.

Love,

Bapu

Y. M.

5-10-'30

114

चि. मीरां,

I hope you have got the straying letters. I am sure they have not been intercepted, but have been delayed in transit from place to place. It is evident, my 'scolding' as you call it, was well deserved, for you have returned in a dilapidated condition. On the top of that, you had a bad accident. Now you would be as good as your word and take full rest. I was much relieved to understand that you had been visiting the Sardar. That showed that you were well enough to travel. I am still at the Gandiv wheel and my rapture continues, if anything it has increased. I am spinning scientifically now i.e., with a yard measure underneath the track of the yarn as it is drawn. I can draw 8 threads in one minute and I pull at least two feet to each draw. This means 240 rounds or 300 yards per hour. But of course, I do nothing of the sort in an hour, but that is not because of any defect in the Gandiv, the less output is due to breakages and consequent waste of time. But since adopting the method of concentration, breakages have very considerably reduced. I therefore often reach 200 yards per hour which, for me, is very good. You will publish nothing just yet of my views about the Gandiv. I want the report of those who may try at the Ashram. Most of all, I want your report, if you have the leisure and the inclination to give it a trial. I know that you all have not the time that I have, for these experiments. You will, therefore, do whatever is possible and if you think it necessary. I having nothing else to do may easily exaggerate the merits of a thing, which I may have disregarded before as I did and which now gives comparative satisfaction.

For the past two days I have gone back to raisins and dates just to see if the cold I have, had anything to do with the vegetables. Whether it is a coincidence or what,

it is as good as gone today. In any event, health is quite good. Weight 104.

Love,

12-10-'30 Bapu

Today I have finished the 100th hymn. Only two remain to be translated of the Hindustani hymns. This means I am nearly half through with this work.

115

चि. मीरां,

I have your letter from Bombay.

I was glad to learn that you were feeling better. You must not let the mind get into the state described by you. If you work with detachment, you will refuse to be rushed and you will refuse to let anything get on your nerves. Having put one's whole heart into a thing entrusted or undertaken, one can leave the result to God. *Then* there can be no rush and no worry. You know the story of King Janak. He was Duty personified. His capital was in flames. He knew it. But some busybody reported it to him. His answer was 'what care I whether my capital is reduced to ashes or remains intact!' He had done all he could to save it. His going to the scene of operations and fussing would have distracted the attention of the fire-brigade and others and made matters worse. He was but an agent of Providence. As such he had done his part and was therefore quiet and at ease. So may, must we be, if we have done our best, whether our work flourishes or perishes.

The Gandiv still gives me joy and satisfaction. Nothing has yet broken down. Whereas I took five hours before, I now finish well within 3 hours. The afternoon is now free for other work except for the *takli*. So on your

travels you may take the Gandiv if it gives you as much satisfaction as it gives to me. The cost of the pattern that I have is one rupee including the spindle and a box scooped in the platform and an incredibly simple device for keeping the spindle on one side of the platform. For price and simplicity this wheel has no match. . . .

Love,

Bapu

Y. M.

19-10-'30

116

[I had returned to the Sabarmati Ashram.]

चि. मीरां,

Your letter as also your detailed direction about the working of the Bihar wheel. I attended to all the matters as you have put except the point where the *mal* should cross. I do not know whether it crossed nearest the platform or away from it. However, I shall make another effort to see whether it works at all or not. It ought at least to work. Meanwhile the Gandiv continues to give much satisfaction. . . .

I am glad you are now going to tour just now. You should build up your body anew. We are both keeping good health. I weighed last Thursday 105 and Kaka 117. I have considerably reduced the vegetables and gone back to dates. There will be still variations.

Love,

Bapu

Y. M.

26-10-'30

117

चि. मीरां,

Your letter. I do not think there is anything special about the Gandiv I got. It gave all the trouble you had, to Kaka. I found out the cause of the trouble, removed it and it has never once given trouble....

I suppose it is true about wheels as it is true about most things, that what suits one does not therefore suit all the others. Experts have to adjust values of different types. We workers must be satisfied with that which will give the maximum of work with the minimum of trouble. If I had the requisite mechanical training or was a genius in the art, I should love to become an expert in carding and spinning and judging bows, wheels and *taklis*. But I must treat it as a forbidden ambition, though I do not leave off the search. The search for me here is duty (स्वधर्म).

Long or short, I hope to do at least one *bhajan* daily. The Marathi I finished with Kaka's assistance. The Bengali too I began but on learning from K. that they were all translated by the Poet himself or under his supervision, I left off, thinking it a profanation even to attempt. I have now, therefore, only 42 *bhajans* to do. Marathi being very short, I was able to do sometimes even three per night. I hope to finish before 42 days are out.

... ...

Love,

Bapu

Y. M.

6-11-'30

118

चि. मीरां,

Your letter. I am glad you are feeling yourself again. Please do not feel bound to try the Gandiv wheel. I know you have many things to attend to and with a regularly going wheel, you might be able to finish your sacrificial spinning without any bother.

Give Andrews my love. I can write a formal letter to him but I do not want to write a mere formal letter to him. I would far rather let my silence speak to him. The pen is often a superfluity, if not a hindrance, to heart's flow.

Mahadeo must not overstrain himself. I have written to him strongly about it, but you should pull him up whenever he is reckless about his health. My cold had disappeared altogether and, therefore, I did not even think of it when I wrote to you last week. Yes, just now it is a combination of dates and vegetables, the latter sparingly. But for the cold, I was getting on all right with the vegetables. I may not give you more time this week.

Love,

Y. M. Bapu

7-11-'30

I hope to finish the hymns earlier than I had expected.

119

चि. मीरां,

Your letter. The arrangement about translating my remarks on the *Gita* chapters is quite good. I shall look forward to the joint handiwork. I want to pour myself out into those chapters. This means additional work for you and will take up a great deal of your time. However, I know you won't feel the strain of it, as you love that work.

Here is a letter from Andrews, this time, for me to send you. He could not restrain himself from writing to me directly. I have at last given him a few lines. Don't give any time to the Gandiv till Keshu has obtained mastery over it and gives you a machine in working order. For me it continues to provide further delights. The original *mal* for the motor wheel at last had to be discarded, as I could not cut it any further for tightening it. It has to be fairly stout and thick. I had nothing with me in the handspun *mals* of the required thickness. As you know, I criminally neglected to learn how to make these little odds and ends. And I was bent on having only the handspun stuff. I had to give full two hours to the first attempt. It was successful and was possible only because only a short length was required. My second attempt took me barely half an hour. I had to make another for emergency, which occurred at once, for the original threads from which I made the *mal* were weak. I have now thought of a device for quickly twisting to the required strength practically any number of threads. My third attempt will, therefore, mean still less time. And meantime, I am having now an accumulation of little bits of stout handspun chords, which I can use for watchguards and the like. All this gives me delight and comfort, for it means greater mastery over the wheel. . . .I have given you the details merely to share my

joy with you. The *charkha*, the *takli* and the bow have become a fascination with me. I do not seem to get tired of them. Daily I wish I had more time to give to these things. I want to secure greater output on all the three. But I am so clumsy and so stupid and slow. Somehow or other I feel that it is but the rigidity of old age that prevents me from gaining a greater output. I have not the proper knack, I fear. However, I find satisfaction from the knowledge that God will accept this little offering as the best possible for me in the circumstances.

If you can stand the cold bath in winter, nothing can be more bracing. You will not strive against nature. If there is no instantaneous warm reaction, you must revert to the warm bath. The condition of reaction is vigorous rubbing with the bare hands. I had sorrowfully to give up cold baths only after that wretched attack of pleurisy in London in 1914. Your food is quite good. It may be necessary to take more ghee. Experience has shown that you need a fair measure to keep strength, heat and weight.

... ...

Is not this uncle, who has married, somewhat elderly and who vies with you in indifferent spellings, though very learned ? So according to your birth date,* you are only a babe a few years old ! ! You have, therefore, many a summer to look forward to.

Love,

Y. M.

Bapu

13-11-'30

* Nov. 7, 1925. See preface page 1.

120

चि. मीरां,

It was bad to have got fever again. But I suppose it is no use fretting over it. There is undoubtedly poison in your system. It upsets it on the slightest pretext. Wherever possible, trace the cause and avoid it in future. If it is rest that is needed and if you cannot take it at the Ashram, take it where you think you can get it. You may even go to Vijapur where Chhaganlal is or some such quiet place. Even a week's change may set you up.

You will be pleased to hear that I have set the Bihar wheel going. I followed your instructions and it went. The holders required attention. . . .Another good piece of news. For the last three days, I have been trying one of the *taklis* you left here. It is giving me more satisfaction than the one I have made and on which I was working. The mouth * of mine is wretchedly made. Yours is much better. I read today the translation of my summary of the first chapter of the *Gita*. I can trace your hand in it. The sense has been fairly preserved.

Love,

Bapu

23-11-'30

* Hook.

121

चि. मीरां,

This is time after the morning prayer 29-11-'30. It is fairly cold. But I do a little writing after the prayer and before walking out on the bugle of 5-30.

I am glad you were better when you wrote your letter. We can only learn really in everything as in the matter of health keeping by making repeated mistakes and profiting by them. This is an introduction to my confession rather than a warning to you. Last Thursday I suddenly developed a bad stomach-ache. I could have avoided it but stupidly did not. As you know, I have been lately living on curds. They agreed very well though the bowels could be moved only by the enema. But as you saw, the weight was going up and I was otherwise fit. So I continued the curds and then too the thick part. That induced further constipation despite the enema. That was sufficient warning to stop at least curds or better still all food for a day. I would not and suffered for the day. I voluntarily brought out what I had eaten and in a few hours the pain subsided. Nothing but raisin water the next day and I was quite fit though at once lost 3 lb. in weight. It is ever thus with me. My weight beyond 95 is evidently an uncertain quantity, probably made up of poisonous matter. I determined too to get rid of the constipation if it was at all possible, so I have continued the stopping of curds. (Here is the bugle and I stop for the time being). To resume at 8 p.m. And I am now taking cooked leaves and tomatoes and dates or raisins. The bowels have moved naturally, strength has been maintained and the weight has suffered no further reduction. Yesterday I added sweet potatoes and today 12 almonds. No one need be alarmed at this change. If I feel weak or lose weight steadily, I shall at once revert to milk and shall feel all the better for the milk fast. If,

on the other hand, the change agrees, it will be a source of additional joy. Therefore, you should all rejoice over the change. If it works, it is well. It is well also if it does not. I shall take no risks.

So Kaka left and he wept as he left. We had come so close to each other. Within two hours of his departure they sent me Pyarelal and of course, he has taken possession of me. I put him on your wheel. He spun 83 rounds. It went practically as I had set it up. We have now concocted some improvements on the holder. He is at one such whilst I am writing this. Somehow or other I can only think of the wheel and all it connotes. The Gandiv too is undergoing considerable improvement. I hope to try the improved wheel tomorrow. I will have a movable wheel and will have a spring for tension. If it works well, the output must increase. I am gradually getting control over the *takli*. My speed on your *takli* went up to 87 rounds per hour. But Vinoba says I must first try the steel *takli* and he has sent me two and I am trying to work at it. I haven't yet got the result expected. But I am daily gaining confidence and hope soon to be able to pull 100 rounds per hour on the *takli*. . . .

Love,

Bapu

P. S.

Pyarelal began well on the Bihar wheel. But it proved a failure. I fitted up the other Gandiv and it worked splendidly without a hitch. Through the favour of the Superintendent I have got the Gandiv with my improvements incorporated. It promises to work well. I have just tried it 8-45 p.m. 1-12-'30. The food experiment continues.

Bapu

122

Postcard

चि. मीरां,

The Ashram post received last evening brings your disturbing letter. It does not cause anxiety, but it furnishes food for reflection. What is the cause of this breakdown in health? In any case you *must* give yourself complete rest. You must relax both mind and body. Therefore, please go gently. Read the 6th chapter, *Gita*. Yoga should be undertaken gently. What work we are doing is yoga. Please drop me a card daily.

Love,

Bapu

4-12-'30

123

चि. मीरां,

I have reserved your letter to the last deliberately in the hope of hearing from you before or on Monday in reply to my postcard which I wrote to you on Thursday and which, I hope, you duly received. It contained an inquiry about your health. This obstinate constipation is disturbing. I hope when this reaches you, all the effect of the attack would have worn out. I have got rid of mine by simply dropping proteid food for a while. I am now taking proteid through almonds. I should love not to go back to milk. Save now for a visible weakness, the result has been excellent. Almonds I am taking very cautiously and I cannot sustain the strength on green vegetables merely and about an ounce of almonds. I have gone to the ounce only for the last two days. I must take a cereal. I have not decided what to take. I want to try *bajri* and *juwari* — whatever the jail *chapati* for the day. If it agrees, the problem may

be solved to my entire satisfaction. But there will be no haste, certainly no obstinacy. Immediately I feel the need, I shall go back to milk.

In another ten days I shall have finished the translation of the *Bhajanavali*. It has given me such joy. I am not satisfied with the performance. Save for the fact that it is an act of love, it has no other merit — certainly no literary merit. But it will help you to know the meaning of the *bhajans* and that was all I aimed at. And when this is finished, I hope to begin the other, viz., translation of the preface to the Gujarati *Gita*. I do not think I shall translate the verses, but I shall go through one of the existing translations and where it is different from mine, I shall note it and translate all the marginal notes. This will simplify my work and save a great deal of labour. Please share this with Kaka. He will feel interested in the proposal.

The improvements in the Gandiv have exceeded all expectations. It now runs smoothly. It has the tension which was absent. But I am not going to weary you with a description of the improvements. I am describing them in a letter to Keshu. I am sure that for speed it cannot now be excelled by any other wheel. But that has still to be tested. My assurance won't create more yarn, I know.

You *must* give yourself ample rest and must not work under tension. It is good for the wheel, but not for human beings.

Love,

8-12-'30

Bapu

124

13-12-'30

चि. मीरां,

Your P.C. was duly received. The absence of any further news from you, I take to mean perfect restoration. After each illness you are soon well, because the treatment followed is natural, but every sickness leaves behind it a legacy of weakness unless the system is allowed full rest and the mind relieved of tension. I suppose the mental control is the most difficult. For this the sovereign remedy is the application of the *Gita*. Each time mind suffers a shock, there is failure in application. Let good news as well as bad pass over you like water over a duck's back. When we hear any, our duty is merely to find out whether any action is necessary and if it is, to do it as an instrument in the hands of Nature without being affected by or attached to the result. This detachment appears a scientific necessity when we remember that in bringing about a result more than one instrument is employed. Who shall dare say 'I have done it'? I know you know all this. Nevertheless, I drive the truth home, so that from the brain it may percolate to the heart. So long as it remains in the brain only, it is a dead weight on it. Any truth received by the brain must immediately be sent down to the heart. When it is not, it suffers abortion and then it lies on the brain as so much poisonous matter. What poisons the brain poisons the whole system. Hence the necessity of using the brain as it should be merely as a transmitting station. Whatever is there received is either transmitted to the heart for immediate action or it is rejected there and then as being unfit for transmission. Failure of the brain to perform this function properly is the cause of almost all the ills that flesh is heir to as also for mental exhaustion. If the brain simply performed its function, there need never be any brain-fag.

So whenever we suffer from illness generally there is not only a dietetic error but there is also failure on the part of the brain to function properly. The author of the *Gita* evidently saw this and gave the world the sovereign remedy in the clearest possible language. Whenever therefore anything preys upon your mind, you should meditate on the central teaching of the *Gita* and throw off the burden. Let us hope there never will be a recurrence of the terrible constipation.

. . . .

For me the milkless experiment continues as yet without any bad result. The weight has suffered a further decrease of 3 lb. but the vitality remains. One cause of the decrease in weight is that I am most cautious about increasing the quantity of cereals and almonds I take. Almonds remain at 3 tolas and *bajri* and *juwari bhakhari* a quarter, i.e., about 2 tolas each time, i.e., at 11 and 5. I may soon increase the weight. Anyway the condition of the bowels is extraordinarily good. I quite agree with you that the enema as a habit is a bad thing and should be got rid of, if at all possible. It has been possible with the dropping of milk as it had become when on going to Wardha, you will recall, I had dropped milk. . . . The present diet is a slight modification of the Wardha one.

Whenever you are ill, you will not hesitate to write to me at once without waiting for the weekly letter day.

Love,

Bapu

125

4-30 p.m.

चि. मीरां,

Your letter betrays about my health an anxiety which is wholly unnecessary. The weight which was taken on Thursday showed an increase of $1\frac{1}{2}$ lb., a very good increase in seven days. Nor do I feel any weakness. I do my two hours' spinning on the *takli* standing as a rule without feeling any appreciable fatigue. I have just now sat down to write this after finishing the *takli*. All the mistakes made last time are being avoided. . . .The food is all well cooked i.e., vegetables and *chapati*. The latter is rebaked when I receive it. Last time, you should remember, it was all raw food including cereals and pulses.* As a matter of fact, I am now taking practically what I was taking before starting the raw cereals. The only difference is taking *bajri* or *juwari* in the place of wheat. Perhaps it is a change for the better. I am taking once boiling water, lemon and salt. In spite of all this apparent improvement, if I find any irregularity about the stools or weakness (persistent) or a continuing decrease in weight, in any one of the three things happening, I shall go back to milk. But just now with the good feel about the health I must not deprive myself of the joy of avoiding milk and taking the *bajri* or *juwari chapati*. And what is more, I like the taste of these *chapatis*. This detailed explanation and description ought to give you and other friends full satisfaction and free you from all worry as to the future.

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* I had reminded Bapu in a letter of the severe attack of dysentery he had had at the end of a previous food experiment he had carried out in Sabarmati Ashram.

In my opinion, while it is necessary, so far as you are concerned, to keep a watch on your menu, your chief trouble is mental. Any pressure on the mind reacts immediately on your body. This anxiety complex, you should try to throw off. ‘ Be careful for nothing.’ ‘ Look at the lilies of the field, they toil not, neither do they spin and yet, Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.’ I do not know whether I have quoted correctly. Anyhow the lilies only seem neither to toil nor to spin. They do both but so naturally that we do not notice their toilsome spin. If they did not toil, they would wither. Only they have not the egotism and hence attachments, likes and dislikes that we have. But when we toil like them detachedly, our toil will not be noticed and therefore, will not adversely affect the body. 7-30 p.m. You and I and all of us have to make a conscious and deliberate effort to realize this blessed state. Or else, our reading of the *Gita* is vain.

You will take care not to burn yourself with the primus. You know how Gujarati women have burnt themselves over the use of the primus. The loose saris lend themselves to the trick especially at the time of lighting it. As it is kept on the floor, they have to bend and the rising flame easily catches a fold or a loose end of the sari. It may be wise for you, therefore, to keep it on a metal-mounted stool. Then too there is precious little room in your little dormitory. Anyway, you have my warning. You will now take what precautions you may think right.

... ...

Yes, I have just finished the first part of the introduction to my translation of the *Gita*. I hope to do at least a paragraph everyday. If I succeed, the introduction cannot take long.

The new Gandiv has almost all the improvements I had contemplated. It has two springs for the two *mals*.

It is working like a musical instrument and requires very little attention. For the execution of these improvements I am thankful to the Superintendent and an English co-prisoner, who is a clever mechanic and who takes a serious interest in the work. He has applied the spring to the holder in an original way. The idea is incredibly simple and equally effective. But I must not keep you over this any longer.

I am glad you have taken Surendra in hand. It is criminal how he neglects his body. Even St. Francis, though he called his body an ass, took some care of it. And after all, the ass is a most useful and patient animal. The brother ass can be equally useful if properly treated and neither pampered nor neglected.

And now here is the first verse of the morning prayer :

'Early in the morning, I call to mind that Being which is felt in the heart, which is *sat* (the eternal), *chit* (knowledge), *sukham* (bliss), which is the state reached by perfect men and which is the super-state. I am that immaculate Brahma which ever notes the states of dream, wakefulness and deep sleep, not this body, the compound made of the elements (earth, water, space, light and air).' You will be interested to know that the first verse was commenced on 6th May last.

I am sorry that the very first verse needed correcting. The more I think, the more clearly I see the meaning. And then I do not mind how often I cut about the translation. Formerly I used to shudder to utter this verse thinking that the claim made therein was arrogant. But when I saw the meaning more clearly, I perceived at once that it was the very best thought with which to commence the day. It is a solemn declaration that we are not the changeful bodies which require sleep etc. but deep down, we are the Being, the witness pervading the countless bodies. The first part

is the recalling to mind the presence of the vital principle and the second part is the affirmation that we are that vital principle. The description of the Being, the Brahma is also quite apposite. It *is*, nothing else *is* (*sat*), it is all knowledge or light (*chit*), and naturally, therefore, it is all bliss (*sukham*) or the word generally used is (*anand*). The rest is simple. You will compare this translation with what you have already, translated by Valjibhai. If there is a material difference, let me have his translation. In scholarship I should yield the palm to him. So now God willing, you may expect a present of this character every week. And here goes the bugle telling me it will presently be 9 p.m.

Love,

Y. M.
20-12-'30

Bapu

126

चि. मीरां,

Your letter. This time I must be very brief as the post came two days late. I start therefore with the translation of the 2nd verse: 'In the early morning I worship Him who is beyond the reach of thought and speech and yet by whose grace all speech is possible, I worship Him whom the Vedas describe as *neti, neti* (not this, not this). Him they (the sages) have called God of gods, the unborn, the unfallen, the source of all.'

I do not think that this calls for any explanation. The translation of the preface is proceeding apace. And as there was no Ashram post till Friday, I devoted the spare time to translating more paras. The result is that now there are only 10 more left. It will be time then to consider whether I can translate the *Gita* notes I am writing for the Ashram inmates. Just now the 100 rounds on the *takli* take up much

time. But I am now showing an increase in speed. The speed on the Gandiv today was for me quite a record i.e. 169 rounds in 40 minutes. This means 255 in 60 minutes. The improvements are primarily responsible for this speed. If I continue to show improvement, I may have some more time for writing work. For I do not want to be greedy just now in the way of increase in the output. I shall stick to 300 on the wheel and 100 on the *takli* till I show a permanent marked increase in speed.

I was quite sure you would get your foreign mail.

Of my health, which is excellent, more in the general letter. . . .

Love,

29/30-12-'30 Bapu

127

चि. मीरां,

I have read the two renderings you have sent me of the first verse of the morning prayer. For use and perhaps conveying the meaning, I prefer my rendering. If you find any obscurity anywhere, please tell me. The 2nd I sent you by the last mail. Here is the 3rd.

'In the early morning I bow to Him who is beyond darkness, who is like the sun, who is perfect, ancient, called Purushottam (the best among men) and in whom (through the veil of darkness) we fancy the whole universe as appearing even as (in darkness) we imagine a rope to be a snake.'

The idea is that the universe is not real in the sense of being permanent, it is neither a thing to be hankered after nor feared because it is supposed, to be God's creation. As a

matter of fact, it is a creation of our imagination even as the snake in the rope is. The real universe like the real rope is there. We perceive either when the veil is lifted and darkness is gone — compare 'And with the morn, those angel faces smile which I have loved long since and lost awhile.' The three verses go together and I think are Shankar's composition. You do know of Shankar, do you not? Five more days and I shall have finished the translation of the preface. My suggestion is that I continue to send you the verses and the *bhajans* with such comments as then occur to me. You should for your own satisfaction, with the help of whoever comes your way, translate the weekly notes on the *Gita*. The plan I am now following is well thought out i.e., that of looking through the translation of the whole *Gita* in the light of my rendering and translating the notes. The attempt may lead to something good of which we have no knowledge today. If I begin the translation of the weekly notes, the above plan may fall through altogether. It would not be right. Of my food experiment, you will learn everything from Narandas. The assurance, that the moment I find it necessary I shall revert to milk, should remove all cause for anxiety.

By the travelling wheel I suppose, you mean the box wheel of the Pratisthan type. Whatever it is, your speed is certainly quite good. Let the Gandiv disappear from your mind unless Kaka has something to show....

... ...

I was sorry to learn about Romain Rolland's health. Do please send him my love and tell him I often think of him and pray that he may be long spared in the service of humanity.

... ...

Love,

3-1-'31 Bapu

128

7th January 1931

चि. मीरां,

Though the Ashram post has not yet been received, as it generally is, in order to avoid pressure on my time, I commence the letters now. Here is the fourth verse :

'O Goddess Earth, with the ocean for thy garment, mountains for thy breasts, thou consort of Vishnu (Preserver) I bow to thee ; forgive the touch of my feet.'

Bowing to the earth we learn or ought to learn to be humble even as the earth is humble. She supports the beings that tread upon her. She is therefore rightly the consort of Vishnu. This conception, in my opinion, does no violence to truth. On the contrary, it is beautiful and is wholly consistent with the idea that God is everywhere. There is nothing inanimate for Him. We are of the earth earthy. If earth is not, we are not. I feel nearer God by feeling Him through the Earth. In bowing to the Earth, I at once realize my indebtedness to Him and if I am a worthy child of that Mother, I shall at once reduce myself to dust and rejoice in establishing kinship with not only the lowliest of human beings, but also with lowest forms of creation whose fate — reduction to dust — I have to share with them. And if considered as mere life without the earthy tabernacle, I regard myself as imperishable ; the lowest form of creation is just as imperishable as my soul is.

This attack of diarrhoea is a positive blessing for me. It has caused no pain, meant no interruption of my work. And yet, it has taught me lessons. I feel a greedy eater. The *bajri* and *juwari* are new foods for me. I should have taken them sparingly and omitted them occasionally. Even

one *bhakhari* per day was evidently too much for me. But I did not do it. I thought I would make up for lost weight quickly. I know no such thing as full satisfaction of hunger, no matter how much I eat, i.e., within my limitations. I always rise with an empty stomach. I therefore learn my mistake after the event. And then everything practically is tasty for me. I went to *bajri* and *juwari* for feeling tangibly akin to the fellow prisoners. But for me these *bhakharis* had a definitely pleasant taste. In these mixed circumstances to practise not only moderation but spare eating is a difficult performance. An occasional fast and at least once per month is a good thing, it seems, even for light-weight people. But I seem to have full control over this crisis, if it can be so called. I am not interrupting the experiment altogether, but shall modify it from time to time, as may be found necessary. I took curds, as you know, yesterday. Feeling quite well at 11 o'clock, I took finely powdered twice cooked almonds and soaked raisins. This is how matters stand today, (Wednesday). This will be posted six days after. You will have further developments either through this letter or through the general letter. I give you these details to put you and the others at ease. The knowledge that the slightest derangement in my health upsets you all, causes me more anxiety than the derangement itself. Complete abandonment of dietetic experiment will be for me the worst evil. It is part of my search. But the evil is not in the experiment, the evil is in me. I have not learnt the art of taking food as medicine, pure and simple. That means complete mastery over the palate. I am far from it still. I believe that if I acquire it, the giving up of milk will be an easy job. That it is not a healthy human being's food, I have not a shadow of a doubt. In health, I have lived without it for six years. Through my folly that health was undermined. To undo the effect of that folly, instead of paying with my life for it, I went to milk always hoping to struggle out of it again. The

struggle must continue. Every defeat humbles me, chastens me and opens up newer outlooks. The urge for struggle becomes intenser with defeat. The continuance gives me peace. Col. Steele, the Civil Surgeon, comes to see me every fortnight and Major Martin came today. Their first remark was that I was looking exceptionally well. And this after practically three days' fast. And they were right. I am not feeling any the worse for the 'crisis'. Then and in any case, be careful for nothing.

12-1-'31

I take up the letter where I left it on 7th. I seem to feel quite all right. The bowels are again quite regular. My food is almond paste dissolved in water and dates in the morning, curds and dates at noon, dissolved almond paste and dates in the evening. Hot water, lemon and salt 7-30 a.m., cold water, lemon and soda 1-30 p.m.... So again there is nothing further to report. I would warn you against publishing anything about these interruptions in health, as they will be magnified by the public and there will be unnecessary alarm and unwarranted reflections against the Government. In this case, at any rate, no blame of any kind can be cast on them.

I have your letter and the P. C. Let us thank God that Rolland is quite out of the wood. The world needs him for many years yet. His work, so far as we can see, is not finished. Please send him my loving regards and say he must hold on for a while.

I finished the translation of the preface two days ago and have taken up nothing further. But I feel like taking up the original plan. I am likely to come to a decision tomorrow after the Ashram post is finished.

... ...

As to secrecy, there seems to be some confusion of thought as expressed by you. If a butcher asks me in which

direction a cow is gone, I am in no way bound to disclose the information to him. I may not mislead him but, nor may I lead him to where the cow is. Not only that, I may even hide away the cow. Indeed it would be my duty to do so. From this instance one may shape one's conduct in given circumstances.

Love,

12-1-'31

Bapu

Your description of Totaramji's love of gardening is enchanting. I wish some youngsters will learn the art from him. You should discuss this with Narandas.

129

14-1-'31

चि. मीरां,

Again I commence the Ashram letters with yours and that just after the morning prayer. The 5th verse is :

'May the Goddess Saraswati (of learning), the Destroyer completely of black ignorance, protect me, she who is white as the *mogara* flower, the moon, and a garland of snow, who has worn white robes, whose hands are adorned with the beautiful bamboo of her *veena* (a kind of violin), who is seated on a white lotus and who is always adored by Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva and the other gods.'

18-1-'31

To me the thought here is very beautiful. Learning of course means wisdom. The emphasis on threefold whiteness — that of snow, moon, flower and the white dress and white seat is intended to show that uttermost purity is an indispensable part of wisdom or learning. As you explore the deeper meaning of these and kindred verses, you will

find every virtue personified and made a living reality instead of a dead dictionary word. These imaginary gods are more real than the so-called real things we perceive with our five senses. When I recite this verse, for instance, I never think that I am addressing an imaginary picture. The recitation is a mystical act. That when I analyse the act intellectually, I know that the goddess is an imaginary being, does not in any way affect the value of this recitation at prayer time. If all this is not clear to you, you must unhesitatingly tax me. So you are to be travelling again. I can only say 'do not overdo it, do not strain yourself beyond endurance.'

I telegraphed about Surendra. He must have given up his fast. For me, I am quite all right. I have not yet gone back to vegetables or bread. Almonds, dates, and a little milk or curds and lemons seem to keep me perfectly fit. To be able to keep standing at the *takli* for nearly two hours is not a bad feat for me and I sit at the wheel for nearly two hours without any support to the back. Add to that nearly 45 minutes for carding and sliver making.

Love,

Bapu

130

[I was again on a Khadi tour.]

चि. मीरां,

It is again Wednesday morning after prayer. If I am fortunate like last week, I may get the post about 8 a.m. today. But it gives me pleasure to copy out the verses (this time they will be two) for you before I commence the weekly batch of letters. Here then are 6th and 7th verses with the notes made at the time :

6. 'O God with a curved mouth and big body, refulgent like ten million suns, keep me ever free from harm whilst doing beneficent acts.'

Note: This is addressed to God represented by the mystic letter ॐ pronounced 'OM'; mark its curved mouth and big body. Its mystic splendour has been sung by the *Upanishads*.

7. '*Guru* (teacher) is Brahma, he is Vishnu, he is Mahadeo, he is the great *Brahman* itself. I bow to that *guru*.'

Note: This refers of course to the spiritual teacher. This is not a mechanical or artificial relationship. The teacher is not all this in reality, but he is all that to the disciple who finds his full satisfaction in him and imputes perfection to him, who gave him a living faith in a living God. Such a *guru* is a rarity at least nowadays. The best thing, therefore, is to think of God Himself as one's *guru* or await the Light in faith.

No further comment beyond the notes seems necessary.

The decision as to further translation is made. For my own satisfaction, I must embark upon the translation. Any short cut will be longer in the end. There will be no stopping after making the commencement. I seem, therefore, to be dreading the commencement, whilst the present pressure continues. The dread is more mental than real. But mind supersedes reality.

... ...

25-1-'31

I have your letter from Sind. The rendering of the 2nd chapter is excellent. There are two corrections I would suggest. Instead of 'notion' I should have 'weakness' at

page 1 and at page 7 instead of 'followers of *Vedas*' I should have 'the *Vedic* literalists'. The second correction is vital, not so the first. The followers of the *Gita* are also followers of the *Vedas*. But these follow the spirit. The literalists, as the very name implies, follow the letter. I do not know whether I was to return the notes you have sent. I shall not re-read your letter, but am preserving the notes till I hear further from you. They are no longer required for immediate publication, though this one is good enough any day for publication, subject to the vital correction. What you say about rebirth is sound. It is nature's kindness that we do not remember past births. Where is the good either of knowing in detail the numberless births we have gone through? Life would be a burden if we carried such a tremendous load of memories. A wise man deliberately forgets many things, even as a lawyer forgets the cases and their details as soon as they are disposed of. Yes, 'death is but a sleep and a forgetting'. My health is quite good. Energy sometimes astonishes me. I fancy that I could not negotiate two hours' continuous standing at the *takli* whilst I was at the Ashram. I was weighed on Thursday and I was 98 lb., a gain of 2½ lb. in one week. It is an achievement. I am, have been for the past five days, on vegetables, brown bread, almonds (paste), dates and sour limes. Dates I take principally in the morning. Brown bread is well toasted. I have not felt the need of milk or curds, if I did, I should take either. You will thus see that there is no cause whatsoever for anxiety. It may be that I may need a dose of milk or curds periodically. If I do, I shall take it, as I may take medicine.

Love,

25-1-'31

Bapu

[Between the last letter and this, eventful months had gone by. Bapu had been released from jail, Pandit Motilal Nehru had passed away, the Gandhi-Irwin Pact had been signed, and the Karachi Congress had taken place.]

चि. मीरां,

I get your love letters regularly. I note that you will meet me at Bombay on 16th instant for certain. The Broach appointment is cancelled. I, therefore, leave Ahmedabad on 15th instant. Therefore it is likely that you will travel by the same train as I shall. I leave by the first mail.

This should reach you just the day you would be leaving Karachi. R. Rolland cabled to Ambalalbhai inquiring about your and my health. Evidently the reporters had done the mischief. He had wired back saying both of us were doing well. I wonder if you had anything from your mother. In any case, she must have had anxious days for nothing. Your system will be all the purer for the measles.*

I did not tell you that my blood pressure was found to be lower than 160, which was better than the last and the nervous system was quite good. Dr. A. had expected deterioration in both. Of course, I am still weak and disinclined to work. But that is natural. The terrible strain of Karachi has not still worn out.

... ...

Love,

Bapu

---

*I fell ill with chickenpox in the Congress camp at Karachi and had to be removed to the fever hospital.

चि. मीरां,

You are on the brain. I look about me and miss you. I open the *charkha* and miss you. So on and so forth. But what is the use ? You have done the right thing. You have left your home, your people and all that people prize most, not to serve me personally but to serve the cause I stand for. All the time you were squandering your love on me personally, I felt guilty of misappropriation. And I exploded on the slightest pretext. Now that you are not with me, my anger turns itself upon me for having given you all those terrible scoldings. But I was on a bed of hot ashes * all the while I was accepting your service. You will truly serve me by joyously serving the cause. "Cheer boys cheer, no more of idle sorrow."

Love,

24-6-'31

Bapu

133

Unrevised

चि. मीरां,

I have all your letters. Mother is slowly going. It will be well if the end comes soon. It is better to leave a body one has outgrown. To wish to see the dearest ones as long as possible in the flesh is a selfish desire and it comes out of weakness or want of faith in the survival of the soul after the dissolution of the body. The form ever changes, ever perishes, the informing spirit neither changes nor

* The struggle was terrible. I too was on a bed of hot ashes because I could feel that Bapu was. This was one of the occasions when, somehow or other, I managed to tear myself away.

perishes. True love consists in transferring itself from the body to the dweller within and then necessarily realizing the oneness of all life inhabiting numberless bodies. You will now see why I do not tempt you to go to London *now*. But you know that you are at liberty to do so, if your love impels you thither. There would be nothing wrong if you felt the urge to go.

... ...

Love,

Borsad, Bapu

6-7-'31

134

चि. मीरां,

As ever, in Bombay I get no time for correspondence. The thing commenced this time also at 4-30 a.m. and went on till 11 p.m. I never retired before then. Nevertheless, the health remained quite good.

Today we reached Surat early morning. I had over an hour's sleep and feel rested. I have been left alone. The weather is cool. The sky overcast. Fresh breeze blowing all the time. Of course it was the same in Bombay. I wonder how it is faring with you and how Father Elwin is standing the Ashram life and climate.

We are off to Simla tonight.* Ba goes with me. I do not expect to have to give more than three days to Simla. I should know there definitely whether we are to go to London or not.

Here comes Mahadeo to give me news about you all and interrupt this letter.

---

* For discussions with Lord Willingdon regarding the question of Bapu attending the Round Table Conference.

So mother is gone. I read your suppressed grief in every line of your letter. After all we are very human. The ability to suppress is the preliminary to eradication. God give you the strength. So far as mother herself was concerned, it is, as you say, welcome news. Let this death of one whom you loved so, be a means of enriching your faith in the future and in the oneness of all life. If this oneness was not a fact we would not have been blessed with the capacity to forget the death of dearest ones. Let this death also spur you to greater dedication to service.

I wonder if you got the dates you wanted. But let them not grow on you. I find that raisins are not a bad change.

Love,

Bapu

135

Dictated

Simla,
July 19, 1931

चि. मीरां,

As usual outside Gujarat I can get no time for writing letters and I have been only a trifle better in Simla than Bombay. Here though there is not such a rush of visitors, constant attendance upon Emerson and interviews with the Home Member and the Viceroy separately and prolonged beyond all calculation, have left me no time for anything else, and twice I had to finish the evening meal hurriedly.

I followed your advice and read the introduction in the "library". The original must be very good. I marvel at the immense industry that Romain Rolland gives to all he writes. The introduction is another sketch like the one

he wrote before, bringing his opinion up to date. Your translation is quite readable. It does require retouching in several places, but I have no difficulty in making out what the original must be like. The merit of your translation is that it is faithful to the original.

For the reasons you have stated, you are naturally anxious to know definitely whether we are going to London or not. But I fear that I might not be able to come to a decision even at the end of the Simla visit. There are many difficulties and many hitches. I think I have been able to make it clear to the authorities that I cannot go if the present unsatisfactory state of things continues. But the authorities may find it difficult or may be unwilling to give satisfaction. I had hoped to be able to leave today, but may not be able to get away before Tuesday or Wednesday. These delays do not worry me because it has been the lot of my life. "Take no thought for the morrow" has got to be literally followed by one who will enforce his own life to the teaching of the *Gita*. You should, therefore, tell both Romain Rolland and your sister how uncertain everything is here and how difficult it is to give definite news about the proposed departure for London long in advance. The proper thing is not to expect us till we have actually embarked.

I hope you are now quite at peace with yourself and have realized that the loved one lives more truly for the dissolution of the body and renders the love also truer because unselfish and also because it is transferred to all that lives. Every death of a friend or a relative should enrich universal love.

Love,

Bapu

136

चि. मीरां,

You must have got my typed letter yesterday. I have some doubt as it was sent at the eleventh hour. I had hopes of hearing from you today. Father Elwin's ill health causes me anxiety. I trust he is now fully restored. He must not overwork himself. It is unusual to have sultry weather in Ahmedabad in July. I hope you have had rains by now. I see no chance of being able to leave before Wednesday, if then.

Love,

Bapu

137

चि. मीरां,

We are in Surat. It is now nearly 5-30 a.m. After prayer I tried to sleep but the mosquitoes will not allow it. Gentle showers continue every five or ten minutes. We take the train for Bardoli at about 8 a.m. I might have to be there about two days and then to Borsad. Everything was indecisive at Simla. The prospect of going to London seems to me to be more remote than before. I could get no real satisfaction from the Government. It could easily have been broken but I do not want to break if it is at all avoidable. The next few days will decide. Things are very bad in Bardoli.*

My weight was taken at Delhi yesterday. I went to Dr. Ansari during the few hours' stay. I was found to be 95½ lb. on an empty stomach in the morning. I must try to increase the quantity of milk if I can. The health is excellent in every other respect.

---

* The Gandhi-Irwin Pact was not being properly implemented by the Government.

You must not fret over the separation. Hope Father Elwin is all right.

Love,

Surat,
24-7-'31

Bapu

On reaching Bardoli I got your letter. Your description of mother is graphic and touching. I am afraid there is hardly any chance of going to London. I have sent an ultimatum today to the Government. All this is private.

138

Dictated

Bardoli,
July 25, 1931

चि. मीरां,

I could not write to you much yesterday for want of time. I must dictate the balance whilst I have a few minutes to spare. There is no reason for suppressing from me your grief, if it is there. These things are not remedied immediately there is intellectual conviction. The heart responds very slowly to intellectual conviction. Hence the necessity for practice enjoined in the 12th chapter of the *Gita* and in many other places in that Book of Life. It is enough that you do not give way to that grief and become unsettled again. But I have told you that whenever it becomes unbearable, you are at liberty to run to me. I shall feel it, but I am prepared for it. It will not come upon me as a shock, nor will I accuse you of breach of promise. You must, therefore, carry your practice with an easy mind and not allow it to gnaw into you. It is enough that you are striving your best to overcome the weakness and realizing more and more that it is a weakness and not a definite want for your growth.

I have sent a peremptory letter to the Collector with reference to the unbearable things that have happened in Bardoli. If there is a satisfactory reply, there may be some chance of going to London. If the reply is unsatisfactory, as it is most likely to be, you may dismiss the London visit altogether out of your mind. If we have to go at the last moment, what does it matter ? Sufficient *khadi* can be procured and whatever has to be prepared can be prepared for you both by Pyarelal and me. We can easily borrow a Singer machine. A few hours' work should prepare the necessary dresses * for you and the rest can be done in London if we have sufficient cloth. What may be necessary is sandals of acceptable † leather which can be worn with stockings and also slippers or shoes. We have somewhere in the Ashram specimen of sandals I used to wear in South Africa. They are easily made and you can wear socks without any difficulty. These may be made now and if they are not required, they can be sold. The measurements are there.

As I have given the Collector up to noon tomorrow for reply, I should know something definite by Monday. I want to reach Borsad on Tuesday to finish the Borsad work if I can. Provisionally therefore, you may take it that I shall be in Borsad on Tuesday morning.

Love,

Bapu

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* Bapu means Indian clothes, not European dresses.

† Leather prepared from the hides of animals which have died a natural death.

चि. मीरां,

I have your letter. . . . This prolongation of the draught is a serious affair apart from the personal discomfort it causes. I do hope one of the clouds you see daily will burst. I had meant both free sandals and regular shoes with broad toes. I have meant them for both of us. I do not want both slippers and shoes.

I see that your winged companions * are multiplying. Perhaps they are the best company. They can spread your mute message far more quickly and faithfully than any other agency. I do hope to come to Ahmedabad even before I go to Bombay for the W. C. meeting. But this Bardoli business is a hard job. I see no light out of the darkness as yet.

Love,

Bapu

On the train,

27-7-'31

* A Maina (Hindi — Gursal and Gujarati — Kabar) had been in the habit of coming into my room. He ate *kismis* out of my hand and I had taught him that he would get the *kismis* only if he sat on my head. In consequence, he used to fly straight into the room and land on my head chirping for *kismis*. After some time, one fine day, he appeared with a little wife and stood on the floor in front of me, introducing her. She was rather shy, but after a few days ventured to eat *kismis* from my fingers. After a week or so, I noticed, they no longer ate the *kismis* themselves, but flew away with them into the garden. This went on for about a fortnight. Then one morning mother, father and three little youngsters, all arrived in my room and stood in front of me in a semi-circle asking for their *kismis*. From then on they came to me regularly until I went away for the Round Table London visit.

[Again a long and eventful period has elapsed. After the previous letter Bapu went to Simla again for final discussions with Lord Willingdon regarding the Round Table Conference visit and I went to Borsad to await final telegraphic news from Bapu as to whether we were to pack up for the London visit. Finally, a telegram came, saying we were to leave by the next boat, which left us only two or three days to make all preparations. I dashed to Bombay by the next train and spent the next two days collecting passports, reserving the necessary cabins in the P. & O., and collecting clothes and boxes. Kind friends kept coming with various gifts, warm socks for Bapu (which he never wore), shawls and the like. Bapu arrived straight from Simla just about the time for sailing and the P. & O. mail steamer was held back for him. I had spent the whole of the previous night packing up. Just as I had finished, Mahadeo and Devadas, who had arrived with Bapu, triumphantly placed before me several more trunks and suit cases of warm clothes they had gathered up from friends in the north of India. There was no time left to sort out the clothes and decide what to take and what not to take. So everything had to go straight to the ship.

In an atmosphere of intense excitement and enthusiasm, Bombay bade farewell to Bapu that morning. The ship steamed out into the Arabian sea and we (Bapu, Mahadeo, Devadas, Pyarelal and myself) at last had time to breathe. Bapu now began to make inquiries about how much luggage we had got. This was a disturbing question. We told him the number of trunks, suit cases, etc., and explained why the number was rather large. Bapu was not satisfied and told us that we must open up all the boxes, sort out everything and whatever could possibly be done without, we should send back from Aden. So that was that. In the meantime, the monsoon rough weather had started the ship rolling. Bapu flourished, Mahadeo was next best, Devadas so so, Pyarelal rotten, myself laid low. But the clothes had to be sorted. I struggled down to the cabin of Mahadeo and the others, and there we all tussled with the boxes. At Aden nearly half the luggage went back to Bombay.

But I must not continue describing in detail the many incidents which filled the time between then and our return to Bombay after the Round Table Conference was over. Suffice it to say here that the following letter was written immediately after Bapu's arrest in Bombay within a few days of our return from the Round Table Conference.]

चि. मीरां,

This goes as a business letter, therefore no reference to it in the Press.

Please send me the larger size flask. It will be useful for keeping hot water, saving the labour of warders early morning.

I gave a cheque for Rs. 800 to Mahadeo with instructions. I don't think it needed endorsement. See whether he has it and if it needs endorsement.

We are both * well. Love to all.

Bapu

Yeravda Prison,
5-1-'32

141

चि. मीरां,

I have your letter. Now you can write as usual. Did you notice that you forgot to send with me the carding bow that I had selected ? I asked for the handy thing because the larger size required the other paraphernalia. Whenever you or anyone else comes, the larger size may be brought. Thanks to your foresight. I have still quite an amount of slivers. I am, therefore, not anxious about the bow. And I am still resting, getting as much sleep as I can. The rest of the information about me from my letter to Narandas.

Where are the Privats ? How are they keeping in health ? My love to them. Let them write. I hope they had a good time at the Ashram. Have the German friends turned up ? And Miss Barker ? † What about Verrier and

* Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was with Bapu in the Yeravda jail.
† Barr ?

Shamrao ? I hope Pyarelal sent the parcels to Evans and Rogers.* Where is he and where is Devadas ? What about Bernard ?

Love,

Y. C. P.,

12-1-'32

Bapu

142

चि. मीरां,

I have the things sent by you. The sandals are too flimsy to last beyond a month or two, that is to say, the soles will be worn out. Sole leather is, therefore, a necessity. If you cannot procure it, I shall have to fall back upon rubber soles.

. . . .

We are both still keeping well. My food is the same as outside except that I have added curds for the evening meal. There is daily at least two hours' walk divided between morning and evening. I have not yet gone beyond 200 rounds of yarn. But I feel that by next week I shall have finished my arrears of sleep. I must be sleeping altogether 9 hours during 24 hours. I am doing a fair amount of reading.

---

* Evans and Rogers were the two stalwart detectives whom the British Government had placed in continual attendance on Bapu throughout his Round Table visit. Bapu had arranged to send them each a watch with special engraving.

I had expected an Ashram mail by this time. Do not send me other carding bow just yet.

Love,

Y. M.,

Bapu

17-1-'32

I must apologize. I discovered today that you had packed the bow in the matting. 18-1-'32.

143

चि. मीरां,

The long awaited post came from the Ashram only yesterday. I shall now get it regularly I expect. Of course, you were right in going to Bombay. You should be the sole judge finally as to where you would stay and what you would do.

... ...

I have told you already not to bring or send the hanging bow. You have sent me so many slivers that I shall not need to card for some weeks yet. And I am glad. I have not yet regained my bodily strength. I sleep at least thrice during the day in spite of full sleep between 9 p.m. and 3-45 a.m. I need sleep and rest as yet. I do not spin 500 yards like I did last year. I am doing the amount in two days. I am hoping however soon to be able to do 500 yards per day. I will not strain myself to do it. I shall try to conserve what energy there is still left in me. This is no notice to you to bring or send me more slivers. If I must have them I shall soon tell you. My health is excellent and so is Sardar Vallabhbhai's. I have simply told you how much rest I still need. The London wear and tear was terrific and I suppose the body now demands prolonged rest. The Bombay rush on the top of London's undid the good the voyage had undoubtedly done.

As to the visits, this time there is no difficulty. They have granted what I asked for last time. Weekly visits may therefore be paid. But this does not mean that someone must come every week. I impose no restrictions. I simply give the warning that we are poor people and therefore, we have to be sparing in paying visits of love. There cannot be much business. And love prospers on self-denial. No more of philosophy. I know you will all do what is best. Those who are known to political fame of course cannot visit without special permission.

My love to the sisters, Kamla and to yourself.

23-1-'32

Bapu

144

चि. मीरां,

It seems but yesterday that you all came.

...You tell me you are not able to keep your evening prayer hours. If so, you should shift the hour and keep it regularly, just giving a few seconds to the thought at the Ashram prayer time. This is merely by way of suggestion. You know best how to manage the thing.

... ...

We are still keeping well. I still need as much sleep as I can get or would take.

Love,

Y. M.,
31-1-'32

Bapu

145

Unrevised

चि. मीरां,

I have your letter. I propose to post this directly. The account Damodardas gave me of your health disturbed me. He tells me, and your letter confirms that you are working at feverish heat.* You ought to slow down. You can't keep up till midnight always and get up at 4 a.m. If work till midnight is a necessity, you should rest fully immediately after prayer.†

And if a weekly visit to Yeravda will soothe your nerves, you must come every week. I have put no embargo. I simply pointed out my own feeling in the matter. A prisoner is a prisoner. As it is, the authorities allow weekly visits and I can as yet see no reason not to avail myself of the permission. But it is at best a precarious privilege not worth making much of. Self-control is the best thing for a prisoner and his friends and dear ones. But self-control to be self-control must brace one up. It becomes mechanical or superimposed when it unnerves or saddens one. You will come sparingly only if you see the beauty of self-restraint and having seen it, exercise it naturally. If it depresses you, know that the effort is strained and unnatural for you. In that case, you should come without the slightest hesitation. I have gained one lb. in weight. It is now 107 lb. Vallabhbhai is steady at 144½ lb. Honey will come in useful.

. . . .

* I was busy collecting all the authentic news I could regarding the civil disobedience movement. This I selected and edited and sent abroad in cyclostyled copies.

† 4.00 a.m. was the usual prayer time.

Do not expect another letter from me through the Ashram post.

Love,

Y. M.,

4-2-'32

Bapu

146

चि. मीरां,

I have your letter which consoles me. Those who believe in God's guidance just do the best they can and never worry. The sun has never been known to suffer from overstrain and yet who slaves with such unexampled regularity as he ! And why should we think that the sun is inanimate ? The difference between him and us may be that he has no choice, we have a margin, no matter how precarious it may be. But no more speculation of this sort. Suffice it for us that we have his brilliant example in the matter of tireless energy. If we completely surrender ourselves to His * will and really become *ciphers*, we too voluntarily give up the right of choice and then we need no wear and tear.

I have just commenced almond paste instead of milk. I was daily decreasing the quantity of milk because it was not suiting me. It may be that while I am resting, I do not need animal protein. I am simply trying. Therefore, if you have more almond paste we had in London, please bring the bottles with you. Just now I am flourishing on dates, tomatoes and almond paste, of course with lemon and honey water twice during 24 hours. It is too early yet to say how I shall fare without milk. I shall not do anything

* God's.

consciously to injure my health, much as I would love to give up milk altogether.

There may be no time for you to tell me when you come, therefore let me know by letter, how you washed the woolen blankets ? Did you soak them in cold water or warm and how long ? How much lux did you use, in how much water ? I propose to use powdered *Apana* soap. I am in no hurry.

I take it that you share my letters with the Ashram and that you get from the Ashram what may be worth knowing.

. . . .

Love from us both.

Bapu

Y. M.,
11-2-'32

147

[As a result of my sending abroad weekly bulletins of authentic news, regarding the civil disobedience movement, I had been served with a notice to quit Bombay. As I had declined to comply, I was duly arrested, tried and sentenced to three months' simple imprisonment, A class, and sent to Bombay female jail at Arthur Road. There being no 'A' class accommodation in the Debtors' jail, which had been temporarily turned into a jail for female political prisoners, I was put with the 'C' class prisoners for the first two nights, after which a small kitchen in the prison yard was rigged up as my cell. But as nearly all the space was taken up by a large row of stoves, there was no room for me to sleep inside. This was a piece of good luck as it meant I had to be allowed to wander by day amongst the other prisoners in the yard and to sleep under the sky at night, while the rest were locked up in their barrack. It may be mentioned that the 'C' class political prisoners were mostly well educated women, used to a high standard of living, certainly higher than the Ashram standard. But the Bombay Government was particularly severe in its classification, Ba, Mrs. Naidu and myself being, as far as I can remember, the only women given 'A' class in the whole province. A few were given 'B'

class and all the rest 'C'. The most vital difference in this classification was the food supplied.]

चि. मीरां,

I got your welcome letter this morning. I was waiting for it. We are both glad you are happy there. You find yourself there just when you were about to break under the strain. I fancy that 12 oz.* of milk will not be enough for you. You should take 24 oz. But it may be that with the comparatively less expenditure of vitality 12 oz. may be enough for you. I simply caution you against any false economy. Your exercise does not appear to me to be enough unless you do a great deal of walking about otherwise.

I am glad you have so much company. If you are permitted to describe your company, please give me the description.

The books that I can think of recommending are Sister Nivedita's. I would like you to read Dutt's abridged metrical rendering of the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana,* and Arnold's *Indian Idylls* and *Pearls of the Faith.*

You should induce your companions to take to spinning and carding if they have time given to them for that class of labour.

You should be able to do a great deal of Hindi there. But no overstraining on any account. You have this precious and unsought leisure. You will make such use of it as you think will elevate you.

My almond experiment still continues to give satisfaction and the weight still remains 106 lb. which is very good. You need have therefore no anxiety on that score.

Love from us both.

Y. M.,
25-2-'32

Bapu

* 12 oz. was the 'A' class ration.

148

चि. मीरां,

No letter from you as you had promised. But I am not surprised. Such correspondence was held up. But the bar is now lifted at least so far as I am concerned and therefore presumably so far as my correspondees are concerned. I therefore expect from you an answer almost per return. Tell me how you and your companions are doing, what you are eating and how you are passing the days.

Mahadeo has now joined us and we have become a merry company. He is the most industrious spinner among us. My weak arms won't let me try to outdo him. My milkless diet continues without practically any change in the menu. I think I did tell you about the addition of bread. As yet it seems to have done no harm. My weight fluctuates between 105½ and 106½. This is not bad. The others are also doing quite well.

Love from us all.

Bapu

Y. C. P.,
26-3-'32

149

चि. मीरां,

Just as I was sending the enclosed I got your two precious letters. I therefore suspended the despatch for writing this. You now know why I could not write, but then we are prisoners. We may not expect the regularity that independent people can create for themselves. But there is nothing to grumble at in these delays which must be regarded as inevitable. Henceforth, let us hope, things

will move on without interruption. But whenever the unexpected hitch of any kind occurs, do not be anxious, but say, 'we are prisoners'.

I am glad you have put on weight. For your height and breadth, you can easily carry 132 lb. But the heat is bad. It is good to have dropped salt. You might even drop milk and butter for two or three days and you will feel cool.

I am glad you are growing fond of reading. Get someone to procure for you full translation of *Ramayana* by Griffiths and the translation of eleven principal *Upanishads*. This will be enough for the present term.

For Hindi, you should procure *Balaramayana*. As you now know the story, you will have no difficulty in following it in Hindi.

I had a copy of Lord Irwin's letter * before too.

I too have no news of Rolland. But I do not worry. Such interruptions are a legitimate part of the business.

I must stop for the day as I am anxious for this letter to leave here today.

Love from us all.

Y. M.,

Bapu

26-3-'32

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* I think Bapu was referring to a letter Lord Irwin (now Lord Halifax) had written to me.

150

For Mirabai (Slade)

चि. मीरां,

I have your letter. It seems to me that the trouble with the right hand will persist. On coming here I began writing freely with the right hand and I soon discovered that it was no use. It may be one sign of creeping old age. If it is, it is cause neither for grief nor wonder. Had I learnt to use the body merely as an instrument of service and His temple, old age would have been like a beautiful ripe fruit with all the qualities of its species at their highest. It would be a stroke of good fortune if I escape merely with such disability. But even this is idle speculation. I have no business to speculate about these things. It is enough to note such things and take reasonable precautions within the prescribed limits. You will not, therefore, worry about the hand.

My weight stands at 106 lb. except for the fasting day when it naturally dropped to 103½. I take during 24 hours 5 to 6 slices of well toasted white bread, 30 dates, bowlful of boiled vegetable once, two spoonfuls of honey at 4-15 a.m. with a pinch of soda and hot water, and soda and lemon * twice. I take two ounces (nearly) of almond paste. This seems to satisfy me. If it fails, I shall go back to milk. The bowels move perfectly twice or thrice daily without any medicament or appliances. I sleep between 9 and 3-40 and twice during the day time, 20 minutes each time. I spin 375 rounds in two days. I have not begun carding yet. Your supply † seems to be inexhaustible. The balance of the time is given to reading and writing. Just now I am reading Ruskin's *Fors Clavigeon*, a deeply human document. He is dreadfully in earnest. These letters are his best

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* With cold water.

† Of slivers.

effort at self-expression in word and deed. Much time is taken up in writing and now also dictating letters. As I am allowed to write to fellow prisoners, naturally there is more writing to be done than last time. I am glad of it. I send something on moral problems to the Ashram every week. And now I have commenced the history of the Ashram for the past five days.

This answers all your questions about self.

Vallabhbhai and Mahadev are doing excellently.... (deleted by jail authorities)....In these matters we are subject to no restrictions that we would not impose upon ourselves.

Abstention from salt for a time can do no harm and does produce the results you have noticed for yourself. The weakening effect you notice, is temporary and can be greatly counteracted by taking fresh limes in some shape or other. I suppose you know that I have gone without salt continuously for six or eight years without noticing any ill effect. Many had joined me in the experiment. You may, therefore, prolong your saltless experiment to the extent that it benefits you. Milk contains much free salt. There is a saltish taste in raw milk.

... ...

Mahadev has the hymns you sent him. He is going to work at them.

I forgot to tell you that I have now developed the habit of studying the heavens. As you see, my pen is exhausted. This is Mahadev's. And it is now past bed time 9-15. But I think I have left nothing unanswered....

Love from us all.

Y. M.,
8-4-'32

Bapu

चि. मीरां,

Your expected letter has just arrived. Like you I need not delay mine.

I am delighted that you have Kamaladevi * with you and that she joins you at the morning prayer and sings *bhajans* in the evening. Her vigorous skipping reminds me of the time when I used to skip for the same reason as Kamaladevi. I had taught the boys also. Ramadas was the gracefullest and best. It is certainly a fine exercise especially in winter.

It is good that you are continuing your saltless experiment and that it is agreeing with you.

We have here a new doctor. He is a Parsi Major. He loves his work and has the innate dignified courtesy that you see invariably associated with a cultured Parsi. He has been giving me electric massage for the right thumb and the left elbow. The elbow has been causing pain for some time, but only when I work in particular ways. He thinks that it may be necessary to stop spinning for some days, having done double work during the national week. So far as my output is concerned, it is now about 85 rounds per day. For I have anticipated Dr. Mehta by using the left hand for turning the wheel. This is my fourth day. I have made very good progress. The right hand draws much more steadily and the thread is finer and more uniform.

* Kamaladevi was imprisoned as a 'B' class prisoner, and placed like other 'B' class prisoners, amongst the 'C' class prisoners in the Debtors' Prison. She and I began to take too much interest in the well-being of the rest of the prisoners with the result that we were both removed to the permanent women's jail inside the big Arthur Road jail, where we were placed in one of three small barracks, which had a common verandah. The other barracks were occupied by female convicts.

This additional practice with the left hand again makes me think of the necessity of our trying to use the left hand equally with the right. And we should teach the children * from now to be ambi-dexterous. I have already written about this to Narandas.

As a result of the two days' fast, I suppose, I have lost two pounds in weight. There is nothing in this loss, if I do not lose steadily. If I do, I shall go back to milk without the slightest hesitation. I have given you this information only by way of report. You must not brood over this loss of weight.

The history of the Ashram goes on though slowly. In order to overtake the arrears of correspondence, I have suspended it for the past three days. I shall soon resume it.

Study of the heavens has come to stay. I have now a few books on it. This study puts me more in tune with the Infinite.

I won't need to card for spinning. Mahadev has already begun. He always cards more than he spins, and this he does for me. The present stock being so regularly replenished, it is not likely ever to be exhausted.

...We should learn the poor man's art of living. I know that I am the greatest hindrance in our march towards that ideal. You and the other survivors will have to rearrange many things that by my identification with them, have been or will be left as they should not be.

We are all keeping well except that Vallabhbhai's nose and constipation still worry him as before. Dr. Mehta is now dealing with both the disorders and hopes to produce some relief in a short time.

---

* Ashram children.

Whilst this was being written in the midst of interruptions, we saw from the newspapers received, that Kamaladevi had been transferred to Belgaum. A prisoner has no choice. His or her body is not in his or her own keeping.

Love from us all.

Bapu

(Undated. Superintendent's initialling
date — Yeravda, 22-4-'32)

152

चि. मीरां,

Your letter was received at the expected time.

. . . .

My weight oscillates between 104 and 106. I am, therefore, not making any change. I am trying to replace almond paste with groundnut paste. If it agrees as well as almond, it will be good. The others are also keeping well.

Magan wheel was received yesterday. I am going to try it. It will enable me to give complete rest to the left elbow. And Prabhudas will be delighted when he learns that I am actually trying his invention.* Of course my recent drawing of the thread with the right hand will come in very useful.

I am glad you have begun to use the left hand in place of the right. It must be done not merely for writing. Try to eat also with the left hand. No special effort, save a little thought, seems to be necessary.

---

* The spinning wheel with two spindles which are propelled by a foot pedal. As Bapu used only one spindle, one of his arms could, therefore, be given complete rest.

I am glad you had a few days with Sarojini * and that you were able to serve her.

What I have said about my being a hindrance is perfectly true. I may help to start the thing, but, not being able to live up to it must hinder further progress. The ideal of voluntary poverty is most attractive. We have made progress, but my utter inability to realize it fully in my own life has made it difficult at the Ashram for the others to do much. They have the will but no finished object-lesson. We have two delightful kittens. They learn their lessons from the mute conduct of their mother, who never has them out of her sight. Practice is the thing. And just now I fail so hopelessly in so many things. But it is no use mourning over the inevitable.

I have just had a card from Narandas saying that Gangadevi is no more. She died cheerfully with *Ramanama* on her lips. She and Totaramji were worthy of the Ashram.

Perhaps we shall meet soon.†

Love from us all.

Y. M., Bapu
6-5-'32

I spun 24 rounds on Magan wheel. Narandas asks whether you will be able to see me on 18th. So far as I am concerned, of course, you can.

Bapu

---

* Mrs. Sarojini Naidu has been arrested and brought to the Arthur Road jail. We had but a few fleeting days together as she was transferred to the women's jail in the Yeravda Central Prison.

† My three months' sentence was drawing to a close.

चि. मीरां,

In the hope that you would get this on or before Monday I write in reply to your unexpected letter received today.

It is well if you do without the fountain pen. But what we must aim at is the correct attitude. This brings about lasting and drastic changes. A detailed local treatment must go hand in hand with a penetrating search after the root cause, the desire to possess. It is possible to conceive a person not being poor in spirit though he may have nothing, because he is jealous of those who possess. He has nothing, but feels the deprivation. Another may have by him a golden footstool which he is seen using in order to save his feet from treading on hot ashes, but which he converts into cash for the poor the very next moment and feels the delight of dispossession. This is not to criticize what you have done but to enforce it, if it is at all necessary or possible.

... ...

Your left hand writing is certainly steadier than mine. You will in a short time write as well with the left as you do with the right hand....

Magan wheel has caused me trouble, but I am gaining mastery over it. Groundnuts are gone. Vallabhbhai and Mahadev frightened me and I have allowed myself to be frightened. My weight has gone up to 105½ again.

Love from us all.

Bapu

Y. M.,

13-5-'32

154

चि. मीरां,

I was distressed suddenly to find that you were not to see me. My first thought was not to see anybody at all, if I could not see you.* But I restrained myself and saw the others. I have now written to the Government asking them to reconsider their decision. If they do not, I imagine, I must cease to see others. I have said almost as much in my letter to the Government. It would be another matter if they had any reasonable ground for the prohibition. Meanwhile you should write to me. I hope this unexpected thing has not upset you. More later.

The Bombay happenings † are heart-rending. God's will be done.

Love,

Y. M., Bapu

18-5-'32

19th.

As I handed this to Superintendent, he told me he was sending me your letter. I have it now. I do not need to add anything just now. There is no such thing as a blow in reality.‡ After having entrusted oneself to God, where is any room left for a blow ? Therefore, rejoice in suffering.

Bapu

* After my release the Government took it into its head to refuse to let me see Bapu. I was refused admission at the jail gate when a small party of us went to see Bapu.

† Hindu-Muslim riots were in full swing at the time of my release.

‡ Bapu refers to the shock of being refused admission at the gate.

155

चि. मीरां,

I was waiting for your letter. It came today. The shock such as you received must be accepted as the common lot of those who would only serve their conscience. I shall take no hasty step. If, apart from the personal equation, I did not think it to be my duty to stop seeing others if I could not see you, I would not take that step. But let us wait and see.

Tulsidas' *Ramayana* is to me a work of great religious merit. I have not myself read Griffith's traslation,* but I knew that it was the best available and I am glad you have found it so good.

Don't you try to make envelopes there.† It is a fascinating occupation when you have the time. If you have weak persons having no occupation, they may try their hands at the thing. But not you. For you it would be an uneconomic use of time.

I was again 105½ lb. today. So you see there is no cause for anxiety.

I have now acquired sufficient control over the Magan wheel to make the work pleasurable. I spun 202 rounds in 82 minutes i.e., 147 rounds per hour — not bad for me. I hope to do much better still.

Give my love to the Rollands and tell them I simply enjoyed that letter ‡ to the American friend. Surely there

*Of Valmiki Ramayan.

†Bapu and specially Sardarji were making envelopes for Bapu's letters.

‡I give it at the end of the present letter as it was published in the Press. Romain Rolland had written it to a personal friend without the slightest thought of its being published, and when he discovered that his friend had given it to the Press, he wrote and apologized to Bapu, who, as a matter of fact, had thoroughly enjoyed it.

was nothing wrong about it. And how can there be anything wrong in an honest expression of opinion ?

Love to you all from us all.

Bapu

... ...

(Undated. Date of Yeravda Post Mark 26-5-'32)

GANDHIJI-ROMAIN ROLLAND MEETING

Impression of His Visit

The following which is taken from *The Nation* (New York) is a letter written by Romain Rolland to an American friend of his on the visit of Gandhiji to his home :

How I should have liked to have you here during the visit of the Indians ! They stayed five days — from the 5th to 11th December — at the Villa Vionette. The little man, bespectacled and toothless, was wrapped in his white burnoose, but his legs thin as a heron's stilts, were bare. His shaven head with its few coarse hairs was uncovered and wet with rain. He came to me with a dry laugh, his mouth open like a good dog panting, and flinging an arm round me leaned his cheek against my shoulder. I felt his gizzled head against my cheek. It was, I amuse myself thinking, the kiss of Saint Dominie and St. Francis.

Then came Mira (Miss Slade), proud of figure and with the stately bearing of a Demeter, and finally three Indians, one a young son of Gandhi, Devadas, with a round and happy face. He is gentle, and but little aware of the grandeur of his name. The others were secretaries — disciples — two young men of rare qualities of heart and mind : Mahadev Desai and Pyarelal.

As I had contrived shortly beforehand to get a severe cold on my chest, it was to my house and to the chamber

on the second floor where I sleep at Villa Olga — you will remember it — that Gandhi came each morning for long conversations. My sister interpreted, with the assistance of Mira, and I had also a Russian friend and secretary, Miss Kondacheff, who took notes on our discussions. Some good photographs by Schlemmer, our neighbour from Montreux, recorded the aspect of our interviews.

Evenings, at seven o'clock, prayers were held in the first floor salon. With lights lowered, the Indian seated on the carpet, and the little assembly of the faithful grouped about, there was a suite of three beautiful chants — the first an extract from the *Gita*, the second an ancient hymn on the Sanskrit texts which Gandhi had translated, and the third a canticle of Rama and Sita, intoned by the warm, grave voice of Mira.

Gandhi held other prayers at three o'clock in the morning, for which, in London, he used to wake his harassed staff, although he had not retired until one. This little man, so frail in appearance, is tireless, and fatigue is a word which does not exist in his vocabulary. He could calmly answer for hours the heckling of a crowd, as he did at Lausanne and Geneva, without a muscle of his face twitching. Seated on a table, motionless, his voice always clear and calm, he replied to his adversaries open or masked — and they were not lacking at Geneva — giving them rude truths which left them silenced and suffocated.

The Roman bourgeoisie, and nationalist, who had at first received him with crafty looks, quivered with rage when he left. I believe that if his stay had lasted any longer the public meetings would have been forbidden. He pronounced himself as unequivocally as possible on the double questions of national armaments and the conflict between capital and labour. I was largely responsible for steering him on this latter course.

His mind proceeds through successive experiments into action and he follows a straight line, but he never stops, and one would risk error in attempting to judge him by what he said ten years ago, because his thought is in constant evolution. I will give you a little example of it that is characteristic.

"God Is Truth"

He was asked at Lausanne to define what he understood by God. He explained how, among the noblest attributes which the Hindu scriptures ascribed to God, he had in his youth chosen the word "truth" as most truly defining the essential element. He had then said, "God is Truth". "But," he added "two years ago I advanced another step. I now say, 'Truth is God'. For even the atheists do not doubt the necessity for the power of truth. In their passion for discovering the truth, the atheists have not hesitated to deny the existence of God, and, from their point of view, they are right." You will understand from this single trait the boldness and independence of this religious spirit from the Orient. I noted in him traits similar to Vivekanand.

And yet not a single political ruse catches him unprepared. And his own politics are to say everything that he thinks to everybody, not concealing a thing.

On the last evening, after the prayers, Gandhi asked me to play him a little of Beethoven. He does not know Beethoven but he knows that Beethoven has been the intermediary between Mira and me, and consequently between Mira and himself, and that, in the final count, it is to Beethoven that the gratitude of us all must go. I played him the *Andante* of the Fifth Symphony. To that I added, *Les Champs Elysees of Gluck* — the page for the orchestra and the air for the flute.

He is very sensitive to the religious chants of his country, which somewhat resemble the most beautiful of our Gregorian melodies, and he has worked to assemble them. We also exchanged our ideas on art, from which he does not separate his conception of truth, nor from his conception of truth that of joy, which he thinks truth should bring. But it follows of itself that for this heroic nature joy does not come without effort, nor even life itself without hardship. " The seeker after truth hath a heart tender as the lotus, and hard as granite."

Here, my dear friend, are a few hints of those days of ours together on which I have taken much more detailed notes. What I do not dwell on to you is the hurricane of intruders, loiterers, and half-wits which this visit loosed on our two villas. No, the telephone never ceased ringing; photographers in ambuscades let fly their fusillades from behind every bush. The milkmen's syndicate at Leman informed me that during all the time of this sojourn with me of the " King of India " they intended to assume complete responsibility for his " victualling ". We received letters from " Sons of God ". Some Italians wrote to the Mahatma beseeching him to indicate for them the ten lucky numbers for the next drawing of the weekly national lottery !

My sister, having survived, has gone to take ten days' rest at a cure in Zurich. She returns shortly. For my part, I have entirely lost the gift of sleep. If you find it, send it to me by registered mail !

156

चि. मीरां,

Your letter arrived today. I have now decided to stop the interviews from next week, if the decision is delayed. They will be resumed if the decision is favourable.

The left elbow has proved worse than the right hand. All work with the left elbow has stopped and presently it will be packed in splints. Doctors are sure that it is nothing but the strain caused by the uninterrupted working of the wheel from day to day. I am thankful that I have now acquired full control over the Magan wheel. Spinning, therefore, continues and will continue merrily, unless the right elbow strikes from sympathy.

You will be glad to learn that today I weighed 106½ lb. This is a good record. So you see that there is not the slightest cause for worry even on account of the elbow.

Your saltless experiment is producing interesting results. I should, however, wait before ascribing all the good results to the absence of salt.

... ...

It is a superstition to think that saltless is tasteless. Salt kills flavour. I have known people not touch things with salt in them. Taste is a matter of habit. I suppose you do take butter and bread. These do contain salt. Your experiment is one of reducing the quantity of free salt. The effect produced on you therefore, is due to reduction, not entire absence of salt in your food. But that does not matter. Nor need you worry that you are taking some salt somehow. Let well alone.

... ...

Love from us all,

1-6-'32

Bapu

Verrier suggested that we should sing a Christian hymn every Friday at evening prayer. So Mahadev began "Lead Kindly Light" in Gujarati. And this we shall continue every Friday. Please tell V. this, if he has not yet got my letter.

157

चि. मीरां,

Your letter came in today. Yes, the left arm is in splints. The passers-by who do not know the cause must be pitying me. If the packing of the elbow does not improve it, I might have to try milk. If I do, I shall also try the saltless experiment. But only when I learnt that there was no such thing as a thorough saltless experiment, I accepted the medical friends' advice and began taking salt. ...I have a prejudice in favour of saltless diet. Only I don't want to abstain from it religiously unless I feel the necessity. Meanwhile, your observations are accumulating. They will be useful.

... ...

What may be regarded as a final answer has been received about you. The Government say, they are informed that you were directing the movement before imprisonment and therefore, you could not see me. I have combated that statement and have said that you were under instructions not to take part in C. D. movement and that you were confining yourself to the *khadi* work and sending reports to friends ! * If I have erred, please correct me and I shall have no hesitation in correcting myself. I don't know whether anything will result from my letter. Anyway, I am regarding the reply as a final decision and have accordingly

* This was correct.

asked N.* not to send anybody. I stopped interviews last week in anticipation.

... ...

You should rejoice in this additional trial and be thankful that we can write to each other. But we should rejoice even if that stops. Nothing happens without divine permission. And how can we grieve over what He permits?

... ...

Love from us all.

Y. M.,
8-6-'32

Bapu

158

Unrevised

चि. मीरां,

... ...

Yes, I have been saltless since Sunday. As the doctors removed the splints and found that there was no relief from their use, I immediately thought of you and knew that you would be more at ease if I gave up salt. It was no deprivation to me and so I stopped it at once. It meant giving up the loaf and going to *chapati*. Whether it was the *chapati* or the absence of salt, the bowels became looser than I would care. Therefore from yesterday I have been on grapes, mangoes and vegetables. This at once put the bowels right, though not absolutely. I would, therefore, continue the *chapatiless* and almondless diet for a little longer and watch the result. I was weighed yesterday and had lost $1\frac{1}{2}$ lb., nothing to grumble about. Strength is maintained. The condition of saltless ought not to mean reversion to milk. If I revert to milk and the pain in the elbow

* Narandas Gandhi who was then Manager of Sabarmati Ashram.

disappears, the disappearance will justly be attributed to milk. If in spite of milk, the pain does not leave the elbow and does after giving up salt, the experiment may be claimed to have succeeded. Dr. Mehta is positive that there is nothing organically wrong and that the only thing required is rest for the affected part. This I am giving so far as the wheel is concerned. Anyway, having taken up the saltless, I shall watch its other effects and take to milk if need be. I am watching myself carefully. There is, therefore, not the slightest cause for anxiety. The system is quite good in every other respect. As Vallabhbhai rightly says, if there was anything organically wrong, the mischief should spread to the other parts of the body. I am not repeating all these details in my letter to the Ashram, since you let them see what I write to you.

I understand what you say about your activity. I shall see if I can make use of the information.

I suppose, you know that Devadas is down with fever. The telegram received says there is nothing serious. I have wired for more particulars. And Manilal, Sushila, their daughter and Pragji were all down with that deadly malaria. But they seem to have escaped with extreme weakness. There is a splendid passage in Sir James Jean's book, 'Life is a progress towards Death'. Another reading may be Life is a preparation for Death! And somehow or other we quail to think of that inevitable and grand event. It is grand even regarded as a preparation for a better life than the past, as it should be for everyone who tries to live in the fear of God.

. . . .

Love from us all.

Y. M.,
16-6-'32

Bapu

In the envelope you will admire Vallabhbhai's art.

चि. मीरां,

Your letter came in yesterday. I am defeated. I have taken milk and baker's bread and therefore salt also. Major Bhandari * will not let me make experiments that might endanger health. And he thought it was time for me to take milk and bread, also fruit. He is of opinion that absence of salt must reduce weight and that I cannot afford to lose. I succumbed. The saltless experiment, I must reserve for a future day. I am none the worse for the brief experiment, if I am not better. I have made certain observations. But they are of no value as they are based on much too short-lived an experiment. You will tell me of your experiment, if you have made further discoveries.

Your previous letter I have sent to the Government in confirmation of my letter. Let us see what happens.

You asked what the electrical treatment was. It is called high frequency — it consists in rubbing with a flat glass bulb charged with violet rays. Exposure to the early morning sun should serve the same purpose except these instrumental rays are hot.

Then you asked about the Ashram history. I am trying to deal with every phase of the Ashram activities. But the work is proceeding very slowly. Somehow or other I do not give it some time every day. And as yet, I have not felt like giving it resolutely one hour daily. However, if I am here long enough, the history will, God willing, be certainly finished.

Devadas has enteric though of a mild type. You should write to him. His address is Dt. Jail, Gorakhpur, U. P.

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* Superintendent of the jail.

I don't suppose you have noticed that 'The Valiant only taste of death but once' has a deeper meaning conveying the perfect truth according to the Hindu conception of salvation. It means freedom from the wheel of birth and death. If the word 'valiant' may be taken to mean those who are strong in their search after God, they die but once, for they need not be reborn and put on the mortal coil.

The weather here at this time of the year is always cool. We too had showers.

... ...

Yes, I wrote to Narandas suggesting five minutes' silence. I forgot to write to you about it. I am not doing it here. It is unnecessary here and for you, it is impracticable. The rapid repetition of *Ramanama* in a new assembly is undoubtedly good. For very rapid repetition, mere Rama, Rama, Rama, Rama...is often used. If it is done with proper cadence, the effect is ecstatic. Yes, we get up at 3-40. The prayer at 4 and 7-30.

... ...

I hope you are not overworking yourself.

Love from us all.

Y. M.,
22-6-'32

Bapu

P. S.

You know that the quaker practice during silence does not require the closing of the eyes. In that case the difficulty about the time is overcome. But, for you all this is needless.

चि. मीरां,

... ...

Where are your Urdu-English and English-Urdu dictionaries? I need them badly. My Urdu studies are growing. I am reading fairly extensively. I must, therefore, enrich my Urdu collection of books. There are several books at the Ashram. I propose to send for them.

There is nothing to report just now about my health.

The improvement you notice in your system is certainly very encouraging. The increase in milk and fruit was necessary.

... ...

There is no reply to my letter about you. There may be no reply!

... ...

For the cadence of *Ramanama*, you should get hold of Panditji * when he passes through Bombay. I think he could recommend one of his fellow teachers of the Gandharva Mahavidyalaya if you wrote to him. You would learn it in half an hour's time.

Who are the principal members of the International Fellowship now?

You will send my love to all the friends in Europe — and Mahadev's too — and to the Oxford uncle † and his wife and kisses to the beautiful baby. I can never forget that visit, the quiet home and the very beautiful chapel attached to it.

Love from us all.

30-6-'32

Bapu

* Pandit Khare, music master of Sabarmati Ashram.
† My uncle.

चि. मीरां,

Your letter of 7th instant came to hand this morning (14th). Just now things are all upside down so far as my correspondence is concerned. All of it goes to the Government. What happens then I do not know. I am enquiring. Such is prison life. It is a good discipline in patience.

... ...

I am keeping quite well. The weight now stands at 105½. The pain in the elbow is at a standstill. It is just possible that the ointment they are now trying may cure the elbow. But whether it does or not, there is nothing to worry over.

Yes, Pyarelal is sure to profit by a temporary abstention from salt. Your experiment, if it continues to yield good results will be taken up by many. Pyarelal will surely try it. But nothing definite can be said about it until you have gone on with it for at least a year.

The papers say you are on the move. Strange you should have received the order when the police must have known you were about to leave Bombay. They must have received orders before your projected departure could have come to their notice.*

Vallabhbhai has now added Sanskrit studies and spinning to the envelope-making. He is most diligent in his Sanskrit studies and although new to the Gandiv wheel, is easily drawing 180 rounds of 20 counts.

Love from us all.

Bapu

Y. M.,
14-7-'32

* Just as I was packing up to go and see Rajendra Babu at Chapra, I received a notice ordering me to leave Bombay. I did not change my plans, but went on the day already fixed for my departure.

162

चि. मीरां,

I have before me your letter and postcard. The body will take its toll. We never know when we commit a breach of the laws that govern the body. And in nature as in human law, ignorance is no excuse. Your fever therefore does not surprise me.* I expect that the energetic remedy adopted by you checked the progress of malaria. Yes, at such times, services of friends become a boon and induce an early recovery. I know what lavish care is bestowed upon guests in Shivaprasad Babu's home. I am glad you are having these sweet experiences. It makes attacks such as you had, not only bearable, but even a prized visitation in that they enable one to understand human nature at its best. And when it acts equally towards all and in all circumstances, it approaches the divine.

Your description of Ganga is quite poetic. I felt much the same as you have done. And it was probably the same spot where I was walking. I wrote my impressions for N. J. This was quite 10 years ago, I think.

Milk diet still continues. The weight is 105½ lb. It has produced no effect on the elbow. I feel no better than when I was taking almonds and bread. So far as the bowels are concerned, I was most assuredly better under that diet than the milk diet.

I do not know when you will get this letter. The disturbance of my correspondence still continues. The incoming post has become regular, but there is much delay about the

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* Within a day or two of my arrival at Banaras from Chapra, I went down with a severe attack of malaria.

outgoing post. I am in correspondence with the Government about it. I cannot understand this sudden disturbance at all. But there it is. Fortunately for the peace of my mind, I commenced my career as a prisoner even in South Africa with the assumption that a prisoner had no rights. If you are still outside prison walls, you will know why you do not get my letters regularly, if you do not.

Love,

Bapu

Y. M.,
21-7-'32

Remember us to all the friends. If you at all can, try to see Devadas. He is so near you.

163

Postcard

चि. मीरां,

Your postcards are a great relief. I cannot understand why fever persists. I hope you have been using the mosquito net regularly. The incoming letters are again being received in good time. There is much delay about outgoing letters. I am still in correspondence with Government. You will not worry if you don't hear from me, or hear late.

Love,

Y. M.,
26-7-'32

Bapu

164

Postcard

चि. मीरां,

It is a great consolation to me that you are giving me daily reports of your health. This sudden overtaking of weakness after every illness shows that your system has not much staying power. But there is, I am afraid, no remedy for it. In a previous letter I asked you, if you could see Devadas. It is not to be thought of now. You need a long rest from work, both mental and physical. Remember me to Babu Shivaprasad and his people.

Love,

Y. M.,
27-7-'32

Bapu

165

चि. मीरां,

You are remarkable. In spite of your extreme weakness, your hand is just as steady and clear as ever. Malaviyaji, to whom I had wired, says, he is going to detain you till you have regained your strength. And if the climate agrees with you, nothing could be better than that you should be under Shivaprasad Babu's hospitable roof and Malaviyaji's loving care. I should be entirely free from anxiety. So you have been having the *tulsi* leaf 'tea'.* I have never taken it myself. I have heard of its many virtues. In my opinion, the hot water is the chief agent. But I must not discount the testimony of many physicians and patients. What I want is to see you restored to your original strength and that without the harmful quinine. The

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* Shivaprasad Babu's old servant prepared me a special concoction of *tulsi* leaves, one or two *parijat* leaves, black pepper and mishri, which induced perspiration and relieved the fever.

tulsi leaf is certainly harmless, and it has a delicate, pleasing fragrance.

Please give our love to all the friends there.

Love,

Y. M.,
31-7-'32

Bapu

I hope you had my previous letters. The Government has allowed them to be posted to you. There was delay, but latterly the letters have been fairly promptly released for despatch.

Bapu

166

चि. मीरां,

I have two postcards and one letter to acknowledge. Vallabhbhai makes the choice of the best envelopes from his ever increasing stock. No wonder you appreciate his art. It is an art which turns waste into wealth.

I am delighted that Rajendra Babu is with you. If I fail to write to him, give my love to him in which V. and M. join. I doubt not that wherever possible, you are speaking in Hindi. You asked me the other day about a further selection of books when, and if you get the leisure.* Babu Shivaprasad has a very fine collection of books. He and Rajendra Babu can help you to make the selection. As you like the *Ramayana*, you are likely too to appreciate the *Mahabharata*. It is a big task, but it is worth undertaking. And then there are the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads*. You can have selected readings from the former and read all the

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* For reading when and if I should go to jail.

principal *Upanishads*. This course will certainly give you an insight into the Hindu thought that would be valuable. Your intuitive love of Hinduism will then have the backing of an informed mind. And it may be that you might have to correct some of the notions you have formed. I would balance this reading by a reading of the *Koran* and Amir Ali's *Spirit of Islam*. Pickthall's translation of the *Koran* is perhaps the best. I cannot tell. But if not that, then Dr. Mohamed Ali's translation. I have now given you fully a year's course of good solid reading.

I say nothing about Devadas as I am writing to him separately. Tea and coffee, if they are strong, are poison for convalescing patient. Tea made after the Chinese fashion is likely to be harmless. You know how it is made, do you not ?

. . .For the time being at any rate, my post, both outgoing and incoming, is again in order.

For the past week I have replaced *chapatis* with bananas of which I take 4 daily. This I did to avoid constipation which seemed to be coming. I feel better. The result, of course, is that there is little salt in the food now. I take none with oranges, which I am taking. I retain a vegetable on which I pour the evening milk.

Love from us all,

Y. M.,
7-8-'32

Bapu

167

Postcard

चि. मीरां,

So you are again in your den.* I hope you will regain your lost strength and vitality. And you will be anxious about nothing. Simply concentrate on your spinning and such studies as you can easily undertake. We are all doing well.

Love from us all. God be with you.

Y. M.,
19-8-'32

Bapu

Shri Mirabai,
Undertrial Prisoner,
Arthur Road Jail,
Bombay.

168

चि. मीरां,

I wrote one letter or rather p.c. at your new address.

I had made up my mind not to chide you even mentally if you fell ill again. I said to myself when I heard of your illness from Kashi that it would not do to be finding fault with you every time you got ill. No doubt we get ill through our faults. But the difficulty lies in our inability always to know our errors beforehand. The other is our inability always to guard against them even when we know

* After finishing the tour, I returned to Bombay, thus breaking the notice to quit Bombay, which had just now been reinforced at Ahmedabad, as I passed through there, by a further notice telling me never to enter Bombay again. I was arrested on the platform as the train entered the station, and after a week under trial, was sentenced to one year's imprisonment.

them. It is therefore enough to know the truth that we ail through our own mistakes and then not always to be chiding ourselves when we do get ill. Your latest lapse therefore does not surprise me. It was inevitable in the circumstances related by you. God be thanked that you are able to tide over these illnesses without their leaving bad after-effects. The elimination of disease germs through natural treatment often leaves the system purer and stronger. The rest you are getting is providential. And you are not going to bother if you get no permission either to receive visitors or even to write letters. Only 50 years ago prisoners could not receive visitors or write letters. Ordinary prison life now-a-days has lost all its terrors. It was a great movement Howard set on foot. It is only in its beginning stages. The day is not far distant when prisons will be rechristened and persons will be merely detained so as to be unable to do harm, whether moral, social or political, in accordance with the conception of respective states. But we have to rejoice whatever the conditions of jail life, trying nevertheless to secure relief wherever possible.

Now about my food. Do you not remember that here in Yeravda I could not get rid of constipation with milk and juicy fruit and that I was able to do so only by dropping milk ? This time too, I had dropped milk only because I could not keep myself fit on milk and fruit. This time I began banana with milk. There was slight improvement. But that was not enough. I have therefore just for a few days dropped milk and am taking *bajri chapati* instead of wheat and the effect has been marvellous. During last incarceration it was *bajri* that removed my constipation. And I was able to pass the rest of the term on bread, vegetable and almond cream. I propose to go back to milk and see whether with *bajri* I am able to avoid constipation. I am keeping excellent health. And as you can see I am writing with the right hand without coming to grief. For the better protection of the left elbow, I have gone back to

the Magan Charkha and am this time able to draw over 30 counts. I am satisfied with this. The output per hour is still bad. It hardly reaches 100 rounds per hour.

Vallabhbhai is making very rapid progress with his Sanskrit. Mahadev is doing both French and Urdu. So our time is being very usefully spent. The weather has suddenly turned bright and is very hot here — unusual at this time of the year. I hope it is not bad with you.

I hope you have the mosquito net.

Love from us all.

23-8-'32

Bapu

169

चि. मीरां,

I got your regular letter today. I am glad you are feeling better in body. Your recipe is not of use for me. That requires procuring goat's milk butter. I do not want to go to that trouble. And I do not need to, as I am keeping excellent health without. I have, therefore, no excuse for it either. For, we may not concoct dishes for the pleasure of the palate. I have done enough of that for many years. You need the change especially there. I don't hesitate to procure what I fancy I need for the body. Today I have taken milk. But I propose to continue *bajri* and see whether with milk it continues to keep the bowels in order. Without milk it has produced most excellent results. This may not be true of all constitutions. I have discovered this that each body has its own peculiarities which have to be found out.

. . . .

I was quite prepared for the news that you will not be removed from there. You ought to be able to keep well there also. Narandas wrote to me about your order for ghee and dates. I hope you have both. I dropped dates because I

could not get good ones weevil-free. You are able to take the hard, dry things called खारेक .* I cannot.

I hope you will have permission to see some friends at least. But if you do not, after all we have no strangers. All strangers are friends including criminals as also jailors. We have here learned to recognize friends among animals. We have a cat who is a revelation. And if we had vision enough, we should appreciate the language of trees and plants and value their friendship.

Love from us all.

Bapu

31-8-'32

170

चि. मीरां,

I had been waiting for your letter. It arrived today. I am glad you have understood the reason for the fast.† There was no escape from it. It is both a privilege and a duty. It comes rarely to someone in a generation or generations. In non-violence it is the crowning act, if it is saturated with that spirit, and the cause has no trace of self. I ask you, therefore, to rejoice with me that such an occasion seems to have come to me. I say ' seems ' for my faith has yet to be tried. No one can dare talk of his own strength in a matter of life and death. The question, therefore, is whether I am found worthy of the needed strength and also whether the cause is of the required purity and thirdly, whether in truth I am free of every trace of violence in undertaking the vow. When I say that I feel like all that, I merely state my belief. Judgement can be pronounced only upon the completed act. I want you to watch the progress of the event without the slightest perturbation. Nor may you at any stage fast in sympathy. Yours is to

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* छोहारा

† On 20-9-'32 Bapu commenced a fast unto death on account of the Communal Award of Ramsay MacDonald, then British Premier.

be buried in your own task which is to go through your term in full resignation, making the best use possible of every moment at your disposal.

I do not mind the drop in your weight if you are otherwise well and fit. The weight will come gradually as you become acclimatized there and the weather improves, it will not do for yet another month.

For me, I am as fit as a fiddle. Just now my food is brown bread, milk, a vegetable, local dates (not bad) and *musambis*.

I knew that you had naturally the art of looking upon trees and animals as friends. I wanted you to extend the idea so as not to *feel* the want of friends from outside. Hence my mention of strangers in the same category. That is to say, there should be a definite realization that personal friends and relations are no greater friends than strangers of the human family and birds, beasts and plants. They are all one, and they are all an expression of God if we would but realize the fact. Such definite realization assuages all craving for seeing outside friends when we are inside prison walls.

The news you have from England about the family are cheering. Send my love to them all when you write.

Our cat family or some of them have a fancy for the *mal* of the wheel. One of them destroyed it the other day. They begin musical operations at meal times and stop only after Vallabhbhai has served them. The mother has a fancy for vegetarian dishes. She enjoys *dal* and rice and especially vegetables. We have an addition to the family, did I tell you ? There was a human touch about the mother whilst she was in pain and two or three days after delivery. She would caress us and insist on being caressed. It was a pathetic sight. The care she bestows on the 'baby' is very wonderful.

Love from us all to you all.

15-9-'32

Bapu

चि. मीरां,

I got up at 2-30 today to write to Gurudev, then to Shastri and then to you. I have your tearing letter. At first I thought I would send it to the Governor. But I rejected the thought as soon as it came. You have chosen to enter the furnace. You must remain in it. My society is no easy job as you have seen all these years. Drink then the poison to the last dregs.

As I wrote that first letter conveying my vow I thought of you and of Ba. And for a time I became giddy. How would you two bear the thing! But the voice within said, 'If you will enter in, you must give up thought of all attachment.' And the letter went. No anguish will be too terrible to wash out the sin of untouchability. You must therefore rejoice in this suffering, and bear it bravely. I know how difficult all this is to do. Yet that is exactly what you have to try to do. Just think and realize that there is no meaning in having the last look. The spirit which you love is always with you. The body through which you learned to love the spirit is no longer necessary for sustaining that love. It is well that it lasts whilst there is use for it. It is equally well that it perishes when there is no use for it. And since we don't know when it will outlast its use, we conclude that death through whatever cause means that there was no longer any use for it. If it is any comfort, know that Vallabhbhai, Mahadev, Ramadas, Surendra, Devadas whom I have met are all bearing the thing wonderfully well.

Love to your companions. I am glad Kisan is with you. She is a good and brave girl.

May God sustain you.

Love,

20-9-'32

Bapu

172

चि. मीरां,

The thought of you corrodes me. I wish you could be at peace. Do write daily and wire tomorrow your condition. I am taking the fast very well. I am writing this whilst I am lying down after the enema as before. Be steady and strong. Have faith in God. Shall send you daily report through Mahadev. May not be able myself to write.

Love,

23-9-'32 Bapu

11-30 p.m.

173

[Letter from Mahadev saying Bapu was doing fairly well. And across the top of the paper Bapu writes in his own hand the following words] :

My dearest child,

You are not to break. You must be seeing God's Grace pouring in abundance as perhaps never before.

Love,

24-9-'32 Bapu

174

Letter of 25th I never received.

M.

175

Telegram

No letter sent today. Thank God fast broken * 5-15 presence Gurudev other loving friends.

Love,

26-9-'32 Bapu

176

चि. मीरां,

God is great and compassionate. He would not try His servants beyond endurance. And so the Government reply came in time to enable me to break the fast yesterday at 5 p.m. The Poet led the prayer, and he was followed by the leper prisoner Parchure Shastri who was for some time at the Ashram.

This is enough for today.

Love,

Y. M.,

27-9-'32 Bapu

177

चि. मीरां,

I had two letters from you yesterday. I wrote a brief note myself which I hope you got. Something has gone to you daily from here and the I. G. assured me that my letters would be given to you at once. So I cannot understand this absence of delivery of my letters.

However all is over now. I am taking plenty of oranges and grapes, and am gaining strength. Sleep is good. There is therefore now no cause for anxiety.

---

* Bapu had received a Government communique which satisfied him.

The Orissa scene you describe and two others in Malabar have haunted me during these days and made the pangs bearable. Gurudev's coming was and still is a great solace. He has been unstinting in his support.

I hope you are cheerful now. Remember me to your companions.

Love to you and Kisan.

28-9-'32 Bapu

178

चि. मीरां,

This is the third letter after the breaking of the fast and written just after the first fruit meal consisting of oranges and grape juice. And that has been my principal food. Yesterday I took thin soup made of *turai*. Today I propose to take milk.

Your letters have come in regularly. I cannot understand why mine have not been received by you. I am enquiring.

Strength is rapidly coming. There was yesterday already a gain of 1½ lb. i.e., 95 lb.

I did write to Romain Rolland. There was a cable from him on the break of the fast.

. . . .

Ba, of course, forgot all her misery as soon as she came here. She seems to have borne it all very bravely indeed.

I hope you are all quite composed now. The fast was really nothing compared to the miseries that the outcastes have undergone for ages.

Love to you and Kisan.

Y. M.,
29-9-'32 Bapu

179

चि. मीरां,

As you were not getting my letters regularly I purposely refrained from writing to you yesterday. This I am writing early morning just after taking oranges and grape juice. I am flourishing, my weight showed 99¾ yesterday against 93½ which was the weight on Monday. This is a wonderful improvement. In a day or two I shall be walking a little. The bowels require the enema still but I expect them to be normal soon. Food is oranges eight, grapes, glucose powder four tea spoons, milk 1¼ lb., clear vegetable soup, marrow and tomatoes. Of these I take something on an average every 2½ hours. I spun yesterday 235 rounds without feeling much tired. The spinning was done in two periods. Wrote a number of letters for the English mail and to correspondents here. With intervals for meals and rest, etc., I worked till 8 p.m. yesterday and now feel none the worse for it. All this is very good progress. And so I continue to hum "God is great and merciful". The fast was nothing compared to what it brought forth. It was not man's achievement. It was God's doing. All this must remove your sadness.

You must have seen from the papers that as to interviews, etc. the pre-fast restrictions are practically in force. Ba can see me during the day.

Love to you and Kisan.

Y. M.,
30-9-'32

Bapu

I understand you have no other companion.

चि. मीरां,

Your letter came in today (Wednesday). My writing was with the right hand. You found it clear because owing to the weakness of the body I had to trace my letters slowly. The left elbow was at fault. Up to yesterday there was no pain at all. But today I have a feeling that it would return with the filling in of the flesh. If it does return, it need not cause any anxiety. Of course I am spinning the full quota i.e. 200 rounds at least. Keshu brought a new Gandiv. It works extremely well. I don't think I take more than one and a half hours. My weight stands at 99 lb. Now that I take some exercise the weight cannot and must not increase by leaps. I have taken two pounds of milk today and for the first time 20 dates. Ba is with me during the day feeding and nursing me. I have to give much time to correspondence as the volume has increased enormously.

. . . .

So you see that you cannot build a theory on a few days' or even months' observation. Do not now try to fix the quantity of salt mechanically. The quantity will adjust itself. An occasional drop will always help. If you are melting and can stand cold water, you should take two or three quick cold baths. And you should try deep breathing. It cools the body at once. This is done through the mouth as when you are whistling. Try in the open air to breathe in the air and you will instantaneously find the cooling effect. And don't stint yourself for fresh fruit. Take as many oranges as you like, and raw tomatoes (ripe of course).

Mahadev had forgotten to give your message to Gurudev and touch his feet on your behalf. So, having your letter by me, I read the portion to him and, much to his embarrassment, touched his feet on your behalf. He sat speechless, expressing gratefulness through his expression.

I am glad you and Kisan are working at making perfect slivers. They are the key to fine spinning. I am just now spinning 45 counts quite easily. Probably the count is finer. It will be tested tomorrow.

Horace, Esther, Muriel and many other friends who write to me always mention you and want me to send you their love. I am so very bad at conveying these messages. I must not omit the Italian sisters who have been sending beautiful letters.

Love to both of you.

Y. M.,
6-10-'32 Bapu

181

चि. मीरां,

Your weekly letter was received today. I am glad the weather there has improved and that you are feeling better. You don't tell me whether you have commenced your studies in earnest. If your health does not permit, I don't want to goad you to them. My question is, therefore, merely out of curiosity. It has been your wont to report your progress in your studies.

Though my weight shows no increase my general condition is decidedly better. I was walking with the aid of a stick. I gave it up two days ago. The feel is better in every way. Yes, Ba has been attending to my feed. It is still largely fruit. But that means much time and labour as you know to your cost and joy. The proportion is about the same. Manilal and Sushila have arrived. On hearing of the fast they could not restrain themselves. . . . He has brought very good apples from S. A. and oranges from Zanzibar. I wish you could share them. It is no use my attempting to send them there.

...You remember Princess Aristarche. She has kept up regular correspondence and sends very beautiful post-cards containing sacred representations and adorned with suitable texts of her own choice.

Love to you both from us all including Ba.

Bapu

12-10-'32

182

चि. मीरां,

Your letter came in today. My progress continues. There is no change in the food. The weight has gone up to 99½. I have almost reached the normal strength.

I had a long letter from Kisan giving a graphic description of your activities. Naturally you miss her and she misses you. She says she profited much by your company.

You mention criminals as your companions now. The word criminal should be taboo from our dictionary. Or we are all criminals. "Those of you that are without sin cast the first stone." And no one was found to dare cast the stone at the sinning harlot. As a jailor once said, all are criminals in secret. There is profound truth in that saying, uttered half in jest. Let them be therefore good companions. I know that this is easier said than done. And that is exactly what the *Gita* and as a matter of fact all religions enjoin upon us to do.

Did I not tell you that during the fast we were removed to another yard where there could be more seclusion. Our feline companions were therefore left behind us. We have now been brought back to the old yard much to the joy of these gay four-footed companions. They are all purring round about us.

I understand what you say about your studies. You will take your own time and do exactly as you feel. There should be no strain either on your body or your mind.

. . . .

Love from us all.

Y. M.,
19-10-'32

Bapu

183

चि. मीरां,

Your letter comes with unfailing regularity.

You will find many more gems in the *Quran*. Some of them are penetrating. . . . Whose translation are you reading?

My weight and health keep steady. I tried bread for two days and then fell back on fruit, milk and a vegetable. I pour my milk over the vegetable which is just now alternately marrow and pumpkin. These are the only two vegetables to be had just now in the prison garden. And I try to restrict myself just to the vegetables grown there. They seem to suit the body quite well. The monotony does not worry me.

I see with the comparative coolness of weather, you are improving. I hope the improvement will be steady.

The seven years * seem like a dream. As I recall the terrible scoldings I tremble. And I derive such comfort as is possible from the fact that it was love that was scolding. But I know that there was a better way. As I look back upon the past I realize that my love was impatient. To that extent it was ignorant. Enlightened love is ever patient.

* Since my coming in 1925.

Ignorant love is a crude translation of the word मोह in Sanskrit. I shall learn to be patient. As I watch myself in little things, I know that I have not yet acquired that measure of patience which true love demands. That patience shall come.

You remember Shanti, the Chinese young man? I had a wire from him during the fast and now I have a penitent letter from him. Poor boy! He could not keep his vows and so kept silent. He is father of many children. He gives a desolate picture of China and is impatient to come back to India by way of penance for the past. His English has improved wonderfully.*

Devadas was here yesterday. He is much better. Pyarelal obstinately refuses to take milk and butter and confines himself to oil. Fruit too he will not take. The result is that he has a soar throat. I have asked him not to be so obstinate.

... ...

If Kisan is there love to you both.

26-10-'32 Bapu

This is going in a special envelope which I hope you will get.

184

चि. मीरां,

I got your letter yesterday afternoon. It is now 5-15 a.m. We have had the prayer, then the honey, hot water and a pinch of soda. Then we three together prepared my fruit, viz. two *musambis* which Mahadev peeled, two *santras* which I peeled and juice of a pomegranate which Sardar extracted. I added a pinch of salt to the juice, and put the *musambi* and the *santra* pulp into the

* He was my pupil in Sabarmati.

juice. They two went out for a stroll and I ate the salad. It was then 5-15. And I began this letter. The left hand writing is by way of change and rest for the right hand.

Writing of the fruit salad I give you my discovery. I find that fruit to produce the greatest effect should be taken by itself and on an empty stomach. You might almost say, the same law applies to juicy fruit that applies to opening medicines. In fact, all food should be taken as medicine. The Sanskrit for food and medicine is a common word औषध. Kisan will explain this more fully to you. Medicine need not be nasty to taste ; nor is it taken for the pleasure of the palate. Food should be treated exactly in the same manner, i.e., suitable food, in suitable proportion, in suitable manner and at suitable times. Here I interrupted the writing for the morning walk and now resume at 6-45.

There are many books on the life of the Prophet. The first place must be given to Amir Ali's *Spirit of Islam.* Then there is Washington Irwing's *Mohamed and His Successors* a very well written work. Carlyle's *Mohamed as Hero* is also well worth reading.

I am glad you have Kisan with you. She should get the most out of you and you of her. I wonder if she got my letter in reply to hers. I sent it to the address she gave. Whether she received it or not, tell her never to write a bad hand whether there is hurry or not. This lesson everyone should learn from my misfortune. Bad writing and bad everything is truly *himsa.* We have a rare opportunity of learning the virtue of patience in prison life.

. . . .

I am sending by registered post Amir Ali's book. When you have finished it, post it to Rehana. It belongs to the Tyabjees.

Love from us all to you and Kisan.

3-11-'32

Bapu

185

चि. मीरां,

Your letter as usual.

As against your loss of weight of one pound I show an increase of nearly 3 lb., having shown nearly 102 lb. today. It is due to my ability to take more milk. I turn a portion into what may be called cheese and take it with bread. How long I shall be able to do justice to it I do not know.

You should get rid of your constipation at once. And for this fruit should be taken on an empty stomach. No other food should be taken for two hours thereafter. The second thing to do when one is constipated is to avoid proteid foods i.e. bread and also milk and take green vegetables cooked, alternately with fruit. That was how I built up my body after the fast. And latterly Vallabhbhai has been correcting his constipation, heaviness and cough by such non-nutritious fat-free and starch-free food. It sustains one's weight fairly well. Dried fruit may be taken of course. It may be wise not to mix dried fruit with fresh. Thus one may take four meals, one consisting of say pomegranate and *musambis*, the other of vegetables, e.g., *dudhi* and tomatoes, third of dried figs or dates or prunes soaked in water overnight and warmed or cold, the fourth may consist of the same vegetable or pumpkin and lemons squeezed on it or tomatoes repeated or it may consist of salad made of lettuce and tomatoes or grated carrots. Such food repeated for a few days should remove obstinate constipation. Sometimes mere omission of bread or milk may answer. I take it that your bread is real wholemeal bread and when it is *chapati* it is made of unsifted whole-wheat flour. The wheat has to be thoroughly clean before it is ground. The whole of the bran is absolutely necessary if

one is to get the fullest advantage from wheat. These observations are simply to be used as a help and must be corrected from your own experience.

Yes, I am devoting practically the whole of my time to untouchability work. The elbows continue to give pain when used in a particular way. Most of my letters I now dictate. For the few I write, I use the hands alternately. This seems to answer the purpose. I have cut down the spinning just now to 100 rounds from 200. Of course there is not the slightest cause for anxiety over this pain in the elbows. They need rest and nothing else. With returning strength and the filling in of muscle, probably the pain will disappear.

I am glad Kisan is still with you. Let her be most rigid about your pronunciation.

We are all well and all send you both love.

9-11-'32 Bapu

... ...

186

चि. मीरां,

Not that I cannot use the right hand but it is better to use the left. I have begun this before the morning prayer just making use of the odd minutes before the little family gathers together. You should not be surprised if you find my letters shorter than usual. The Harijan work has become too heavy to allow of anything else being done. The mere reading of the voluminous correspondence takes over two hours. The (here comes Mahadev) (I resume after the prayer) interviews take from two to three hours. Therefore I must reduce the other work. Since the doctors here are firmly of opinion that the elbows have nothing wrong about them except that they require rest from the spinning

motion I have cut off the wheel altogether and just do the *takli* for about half an hour. The *takli* requires the use of other muscles. This compulsory saving of time has come when it was just wanted. (There was another interruption here for the drink and fruit dressing and eating).

I do not mind your omission of salt. Take it again when the benefit of abstention has been exhausted. I do not know if *juwari* or *bajri chapati* will suit you. Is there no prison ground whole-wheat meal ? Any way one *juwari* or *bajri chapati* ought not to do you any harm at all. But you will fare all right by taking dried and fresh fruit liberally.

... ...

For me I have still progress to report. Another increase of 1½ lb., total 103½ lb. ! This is due to a diatetic discovery as I imagine. It synchronizes with the untouchability work. But the latter has little to do with the increase. I am taking nearly an ounce of fresh dried milk. This is called मावो in Marathi and Gujarati. You evoporate the water. It should prove heavy. But for me it seems to have come as a Godsend. It is too late (early ?) to pronounce upon its efficacy. That the present increase is due to it there is no doubt.

... ...

We are all well and send you both a cartload of love.

17-11-'32 Bapu

It is now after 5-30 a.m. I must now go to the " library " and then to the walk till the goats come i.e. about 6-30.

187

चि. मीरां,

It is again before morning prayer time while waiting for Mahadev.

So you are without Kisan. You are having varied experiences.

I am sending you a book on Buddhism which has been recently received. It is likely to be interesting. I have not read it as yet. You will return it to me and tell me whether you think it is well written. I have promised the author that I would glance through it. But there is no hurry about returning it. I shall be unable to touch anything for two weeks or longer.

I note what you say about unsifted wheat. I shall pass on your experience to the Ashram.

Make any change you like so as to get thoroughly well. My weight was registered at 103 lb. yesterday. I am likely just now to stop at that. I may not increase the quantity of dried milk now. And the growing strain of work is not likely to add to the weight. But 103 is a good weight for me. The elbows are not quite in order. The doctor wants me to drop spinning altogether for a week and I have agreed. He is so sure that the pain is due to the wear and tear of spinning that he thinks the rest is bound to do good. I am to try till Wednesday next.

Proper cold weather seems to have set in here now.

Love from us all.

Y. C. P.
24-11-'32

Bapu

Unrevised

चि. मीरां,

Again this is Thursday morning before 4 o'clock. Mahadev is taking his time so as not to hurry you.* I should never have taken you to be 40 unless some one had told me so. Let us hope you are at least 40 times as wise as you were when you were a baby one year old, and if we increase in wisdom moment by moment then the increase becomes incalculable if not infinite. May the increase in yours be infinite !

For your health I have shared with you the new knowledge I have gained. You will now find out what is good for you. Add to your food some salad, lettuce, ripe tomatoes or tender leaves of some *bhaji*. It is undoubtedly good for the bowels. But you should know best what is good for you.

. . . .

Your time-table *reads* crowded. You should have more relaxation than you have given yourself. I do not think you should be rigid with yourself. There should be a feeling not of perpetual fatigue but of freshness. Are you giving yourself ample sleep ? There should be no brooding.

For me I have to report an extraordinary result. From 103 I have jumped to 106 lb. Dried milk continues. But there is not a corresponding increase in energy or a decrease in the pain in the elbows. Even the absence of spinning has yet made no difference. Therefore addition of weight may not be an unmixed blessing. I am carefully watching this sudden development.

All my reading is suspended. Nothing but correspondence and interviews. Ba has gone to the South taking

* Not to hurry Bapu's letter to me.

Velabehn and Bal with her.* Urmiladevi has also been sent there. There is no doubt that Hindus have never thought about their religion so much as they are now doing.

I must stop now. It is past 5-30 a.m. I must go to the "library" and then to the walk.

Love from us all,

Y. M.,
1-12-'32

Bapu

I hope you have received the book on Buddhism.

189

Telegram

God is our only rock. Fast began Saturday, broke yesterday, took milk morning. No anxiety whatever.

Love,

Y. M.,
5-12-'32

Bapu

190

Postcard

चि. मीरां,

You are not to be affected by the little fast which began on Saturday and ended on Sunday at 1 p.m. It was on account of Appasaheb † that noble worker. Can you recall

* Ba and the others had gone to South India for Harijan work.

† Appasaheb Patwardhan, then a prisoner, had requested the jail authorities to allow him scavenging work in jail. They refused his request on the ground that he was a Brahman and not a Bhangi. He then resorted to fasting. Bapu, hearing of it, commenced a sympathetic fast and by the next day the authorities had yielded.

him ? I took only fruit yesterday and milk this morning.

Love,

5-12-'32 Bapu

191

चि. मीरां,

Your weekly letter to hand. I hope you had my wire and p. c. regarding the fast.

The above was written last night. It is now 5 a.m. after prayer and the drink and the oranges. Of the loss of 6 lb. not in one day but in four days, I have regained 2 lb. This shows that I can gain a few pounds as quickly as I lose. In other words it is merely the weight of superficial food and water I carry about me. The fast lasted only 44 hours. It can produce no permanent harm. You are right when you say that I could not have rebuilt the muscle lost during the last fast.

But the fast has become the normal course of my life. It is the spiritual medicine applied from time to time for diseases that yield to that particular treatment. Not everyone can gain the capacity for it all of a sudden. I have gained it, if I have, after a very long course of training.

Co-workers should not be unhinged or the least disturbed whenever they hear about my fast. They should rejoice at it, if they believe in my purity and sanity. For then it must be good for us all and the whole world, even as every spiritual effort is. It must be for us all an encouragement to greater heart-searching and purification.

I am glad you have again some company of the ordinary kind.

I do not want to start the saltless experiment just now. I am watching the elbows. There is no discomfort. Suspension of spinning is a deprivation. I should bear it for the time being.

Manilal and his wife are off to S. A. next week. Their presence is necessary there. They must not be diverted from their duty by my fast and the like....

Ba and Urmiladevi are doing well in the South.

But I must stop now.

Love from us all,

Y. M.,
8-12-'32

Bapu

192

चि. मीरां,

Your letter has arrived in due time. It is now nearly 4-20 and we have finished the morning prayer. Chhaganlal Joshi makes the fourth member of the human family and if we add the feline members, we make seven. Only the latter won't attend the prayers. Their recognition of kinship is confined to the common board.

Chhaganlal's arrival has facilitated despatch of work, but has not reduced my hours of labour. It was not expected to. Things that must be attended to by me, have to be. The pressure must continue at least till 2nd January.

What is it that prevents the heart from following or co-operating with reason ? Can it be want of faith ? Though I have not come to any final decision, my opinion tends in that direction. Though my reason tells me that there is no

need to avoid a snake if I have love in me, it must be my want of faith that prevents my association with him. Instances of this character can be multiplied. I would like you to make researches in this direction and try to trace the cause of conflict between the heart and reason in every case you can recall. By so doing it may be possible for you to make the heart co-operate with reason. If it is good for me and everybody that I should fast, why should the heart refuse to rejoice ? The heart does rejoice if I am healthy. It is better in certain cases that I should fast than that I should be healthy. Reason says so, yet the heart rejects the clear testimony of reason. Does it do so for want of faith ? Or is there here self-deception and as a matter of fact reason has not perceived the necessity for fasting as it has for the preservation of health ? Here I have simply stated the problem for you without presuming to decide. I cannot have sufficient data for coming to a decision even if I wanted to come to a decision. I must leave this subject at this point for the time being at any rate.

My weight is now 103. I have reduced the quantity of milk, knocked off bread and increased the quantity of oranges from eight to sixteen. Dates too have been dropped for the time being. Of milk I am taking just one lb. Presently I hope to increase the quantity of milk.

... ...

It is useless to appeal to the *T. I.* to publish my statements in full. I shall try to get someone to send you copies of the statements. There can be no objection to your receiving them for they are to be found in the papers allowed to you if you took them in.

Ba is expected to finish her tour on 16th and come to Poona.

... ...

We are all doing well.

... ...

Love from us all,

Y. M.,
15-12-'32

Bapu

I am sending the first nine statements save seventh and eighth. These I must find out................... (deleted by jail authorities).

193

चि. मीरां,

Your usual letter came in at the usual time but as yet without the notes from the book you are reading. For the first time perhaps I found your letter mutilated. Was it a reminder that you and I were prisoners? But I do not mind nor will you. Blessed are they that expect nothing.

You say our fears are not due to want of faith in God but want of faith in self.* But these are one and the same thing. Want of faith in self comes from want of faith in God. It betrays ignorance of what God is. Then again you say want of faith comes from our want of self-restraint. This is true but it connotes the same thing. Read the verse 59 of ch. II, *Gita*. Objects of senses are eradicated only by seeing God face to face, in other words by faith in God. To have complete faith in God is to see Him. Nor is the matter any better by assuming the existence of the fourth dimension. It ultimately points to the same thing. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and all else will be added unto you."

* I cannot remember now exactly what my theory was. Spiritual truths come to one imperceptibly but surely so long as the search is unrelenting. Today I know instinctively the truth that fear means lack of faith in God.

When we meet Him we will dance in the joy of His Presence and there will be neither fear of snakes, nor of the death of dear ones. For there is no death and no snake bite in His Presence. The fact is that the most living faith too falls short of the perfect. Hence there is no such thing as complete absence of fear for the embodied, i.e., imprisoned soul. The possession of the body is a limitation. It is a wall of separation. We can therefore but try to shed our fear i.e. increase our faith.

My weight is now 103½ lb. I have just now eliminated bread and even vegetable and therefore also salt. The quantity of milk is slightly less than 2 lb. Under heavy strain of work milk and fruit is my diet. . . .

The missing statements accompany this letter.

Our cats have suffered disgrace. The mother has been found helping herself to foods without permission and during night dirtying our carpets and papers. Vallabhbhai has therefore cut off the food supply. Thus interdining has stopped. What other ordinances Vallabhbhai will promulgate I do not know. Ordinance rule is the order of the day even for poor kitty !

It is just 5-30 a.m.

Love from all,

Y. M.,
22-12-'32

Bapu

194

Morning, after prayer.

चि. मीरां,

The notes were after all received. Your letter came in at the usual time.

It is a wrong thing to rehearse a calamity * (i.e. an event believed by us to be calamity, though in fact it may be a blessing) and to reproduce in advance the feelings one would have. It is enough that we hold ourselves prepared for the worst. This we do by an ever increasing faith in God the Good, the Just, the Compassionate, the Bountiful, the Giver of the daily bread, the Help of the helpless, the All-Powerful, the All-Knowing, the Ever-Vigilant, the Whole Truth.

Nirvan is utter extinction of all egoism, self. Its positive aspect is capable of being experienced but incapable of being described. But we know from inference that it is something vastly superior to any bliss that we can possibly experience on this earth.

Dr. Gour's book you can keep longer if you need.

Saltless diet continues without producing any effect on the elbow. Great pressure of work has led to reduction of milk and that has reduced the weight temporarily to 102. No cause for anxiety.

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* The teaching of this letter as likewise that of 5-1-'33 and 19-1-'33 has been one of the things that sank deep into my being and by now it has become a habit with me immediately to check my mind the moment it begins speculating and picturing. Cessation of mental imaginings of what might come to pass, either good or bad, is an essential condition to inner peace.

There will be no fast on 2nd.* The reasons you will see in the Press. No time now.

Love,

Bapu

(Undated, probably 29-12-'32, post mark 30-12-'32)

M.

... ...

195

चि. मीरां,

Herewith is my copy of An Optimist's Calendar for you. The idea is not mine but Vallabhbhai's. The author, as you will see, has sent twelve copies. I asked Vallabhbhai whether he thought it worth distribution and, if yes, to suggest names. He gave some names to which the addition of your name came simultaneously through our lips.

Your longest letters are brief for me. You need never think of sparing me when you are writing to me. Indeed I *want* your long letters when you can give them to me without effort. I wish I could give you equally long letters. But I am not a good letter writer. And just now I can't give you long letters even when I could write them, if I had the time. I must be content with giving you about 30 minutes near about the Thursday morning prayer time.

You do not need to think of the fast just now. Never imagine things good or bad until they stare you in the face. Full surrender means full freedom from all care. A child never has care for anything. It knows instinctively that it

* Bapu had announced his intention of fasting from January 2, 1933, in sympathy with Kalappan for getting the Guruvayur temple opened to Harijans. But the fast was averted as a result of a referendum in which people voted overwhelmingly in favour of temple-entry.

is being cared for by its parents. How much more true should it be with us grown up people ? There you have the test of faith or detachment of the *Gita*, if you like.

" Untouchables " * was chosen because some Harijans in the South objected to the new name. They expected some design behind it. Therefore the word is a choice of necessity.

Ba has gone, is on her way, to the Ashram. Urmiladevi went yesterday. I may have a little less pressure now that the Shastris are gone. But I might have to listen to another debate on 12th instant.

My weight went up again to 103 yesterday. The saltless continues. I have no difficulty in so doing. Whether the body needs it or not is the only consideration. The elbow is no better. Of course bread and vegetables are still omitted.

Love from us all,

Thursday morn.,

Y. M.,
5-1-'33

Bapu

196

चि. मीरां,

Your letter arrived as usual. Also your notes on Dr. Gour's book.

I always omit to tell you about what our common friends write about you. They all think of you, would like to write to you if you could receive their letters and invariably send their love to you. Among these are the Kingsley Hall people, the Privats, the Italian sisters, the larks of

* It took a little time for the name Harijan to be accepted universally.

St. Francis and Mary Barr. This is not an exhaustive list, it is only an illustrative list. But I must send you some of the letters themselves. Thus you will find Madeleine's * letter and a copy of my reply, Andrews's and John Morris's, the blind man. I must not omit Agatha, Esther, Horace and the Woodbrooke people. They never fail to remember you whenever they write. You will find with this also John Morris's X'mas card and one of the very beautiful picture cards that Princess Aristarche sends every week. She seems to be a learned woman of deep devotion.

You are late with your remarks about the primus stove. It was banished from the Ashram now some two months ago. I ought to have written to you then. On learning of the death of Prof. Trivedi's brother's wife, from the primus lighting, I wrote to Narandas that the best way to mourn the event was to banish the stove altogether from the Ashram. It was a hard job to convince some of the women. But they all realized the necessity. The banishment was not made compulsory. Everyone gave it up voluntarily. I should have given you this pleasing information before but how many such titbits I must be omitting every week ! However I know that you do not expect such things from me. And yet if I do not tell them to you, you remain ignorant of all the happenings in the Ashram which you should and may under the prison rules know.† I must do what I can.

My weight is the same as last week, and so is the food. No salt as yet. It is no deprivation for me. There is no

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* Madeleine Rolland.

† When I was sentenced to this year's imprisonment I was told that I could have one letter a fortnight and one interview a fortnight, coming on alternate weeks. On enquiry I found that I could exchange the right of an interview for a letter and so was allowed to write a letter to Bapu and receive one from him every week. No other communications of any kind were permitted.

craving for it. When I take it, I like it. But I would not like anything the moment I *knew* that it was harmful for me. The elbow pain remains what it was, not the slightest cause for anxiety.

You need not return the enclosed letters and the cards.

Love from us all,

Y. M., Now 5 a.m.
13-1-'33

Bapu

197

चि. मीरां,

This is just after the morning prayer, Thursday. Vallabhbhai and I are waiting for the hot water for honey. I have your letter before me. Of course I wrote last week as usual on Thursday after the morning prayer. If the letter was for any reason detained by the Superintendent there, he would have at least informed you of the fact so as to spare you the anxiety of imagining all sorts of evil. I brought the matter to the notice of Major Bhandari and he promised to enquire. The letter was duly posted at this end. It may be however that the letter was withheld because, for the first time, so far as I can recall, I sent you with my letter, letters of welfare from Madeleine Rolland, Andrews and copy of my letter to Madeleine Rolland. I sent also a very beautiful picture card containing the virgin and the divine babe. I should be surprised if the letter was withheld for that reason and even then why the letter itself. I therefore imagine that it has been waylaid during transit. Anyway I am enquiring at this end and you may at yours. For me that card was the greatest treasure with Aristarche's inscription at the back.

And from this incident learn the lesson that even if such a mishap occurs again, feel assured that I have

written as usual even though I may not have got your weekly message, and that the mishap must be due to causes beyond my control. If I got ill and could not write or if I was prevented for any other cause, you should be duly informed that no letter was sent during that week. In other words do not imagine causes but wait patiently for the knowledge if it is to come and in any case never imagine the worst. Since God is a God of Mercy, if we must imagine it is best to imagine the best. Of course a votary of the *Gita* never imagines anything. Good and bad are after all relative terms. He takes note of things as they happen and reacts naturally to them, fulfilling his part as if propelled by the great Mechanic, even as a piece of machine in good order responds automatically to the call of the mechanist. It is the most difficult thing for an *intelligent* being to be like a machine. And yet, if one is to become a zero, that is precisely what one desiring perfection has to become. The vital difference between the machine and the man is that the machine is inert, the man is all life and consciously becomes like a machine in the hands of the Master Mechanic. Krishna says in so many words that God moves all beings as if they were parts of a machine.

You see I have written this with the right hand. I notice that the left too requires rest from even the little writing it does. It is probable that the pain in the elbows has something to do with outward fatigue caused by writing or spinning or both. It has certainly not yielded to the saltless, and how should it if the cause is not organic ? It produces immediate effect in you, because with you the cause is organic. I have no rheumatism. If there was any I should not fail to know it. Any way the saltless diet still continues. And I showed yesterday an increase of one lb. It is therefore now 104 lb.

You should, if you can discover the cause of your giddiness. Have you discussed it with the medical officer

there? You ought not to feel giddy at the end of your walk. You should feel refreshed. It is often a good thing to dash cold water on the face and even the head before starting the walk and sip cold water during the walk on the slightest warning of approaching giddiness. Even stopping for a moment to take deep breath avoids it. These are all bits out of my own experience.

I note what you say about your reading. The *Mahabharata* is a good programme. You ought to be a good Hindi scholar when you have finished reading the unabridged Hindi translation without missing the meaning of a single word. That means a great feat. But I know there is nothing that can defeat love.

If you are allowed to drop a p. c. to acknowledge this, and if it is delivered on receipt, drop me a p. c.

Love from us all,

Y. M.,
19-1-'33

Bapu

198

चि. मीरां,

This is before prayer time, Thursday. I get your weekly letter Wednesday noon and I write the reply Thursday morning, after prayer or sometimes before as now. So whenever you get my letter later than usual or not at all, you will know that there has been no delay on my part. But accidents will happen in the best of all possible worlds. There is no such thing as accident in God's dictionary. The world is a chapter of accidents. For accidents are events which we cannot control and often can't find causes for even after they have occurred.

As you see I have again taken to writing by the right hand. I do not do much writing. Some Gujarati every day,

not more than two hours and the weekly English letter to you. That cannot injure the hand. At least no one has suggested that as the cause. The wheel *was* blamed. But even that seems to be an exploded theory. I recommenced moderate spinning on Tuesday last. But I shall not be obstinate. I shall give it up if the pain increases. The weight went down 2 lb. yesterday but the little fluctuation is a matter of no concern whatsoever.

Now about yourself. Whatever the cause of that giddiness, you ought to discuss with the doctor. If it is due to the stenches, you should be transferred to a better place.* If you don't mind I should like to write to the Government myself. You have a very sensitive nose and therefore are more readily acted upon than others by foul smells. Shall I apply for transfer? Perhaps you will be allowed to answer this question apart from your usual weekly letter.

... ...

The expression "There is no prayer without fasting" is thoroughly sound. Here fasting has to be of the widest character possible. Fasting of the body has to be accompanied by fasting of *all* the senses. And अल्पाहार, the meagre food of the *Gita*, is also *a* fasting of the body. The *Gita* enjoins not temperance in food but "meagreness";

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* The Arthur Road jail was uniquely situated. On one side was a Dhobi Ghat, at the back was a dumping ground for refuse, beyond that was a station to which carcases were taken past the jail, often in a stinking condition. On the other side were chawl latrines, the ventilators of which peeped over the jail wall. In front, on the opposite side of the road was a fever hospital, from which funerals daily emerged owing to a severe and prolonged outbreak of smallpox. Added to all this, the jail being situated on very low ground and the sewage pipes being directly connected with the sea, at every high tide sewer gas used to come up through the closet which adjoined the small barrack and had no door. As a result of this, by the end of six months my health began to fail and glands started swelling in my neck.

meagreness is a perpetual fast. Meagreness means just enough to sustain the body for the service for which it is made. The test is again supplied by saying that food should be taken as one takes medicine in measured doses, at measured times and as required, not for taste but for the welfare of the body. " Meagreness " is perhaps better rendered by " measured quantities ". I cannot recall Arnold's rendering. A " full " meal is therefore a crime against God and man — the latter because the full mealers deprive their neighbours of their portion. God's economy provides from day to day just enough food for all in just medicinal doses. We are all of the tribe of full-mealers. Instinctively to know the medicinal dose required is a Herculean task, for by parental training we are gluttons. Then, when it is almost too late, it dawns upon some of us that food is made not to enjoy but to sustain the body as our slave. It becomes from that moment a grim fight against inherited and acquired habit of eating for pleasure. Hence the necessity for a complete fast at intervals and partial fasts for ever. Partial fast is the meagre or measured food of the *Gita*. Thus " There is no prayer without fasting " is a scientific proposition capable of verification by experiments and experience.

. . . .

Love from us all,

Y. M.,
26-1-'33

Bapu

199

चि. मीरां,

After morning prayer Thursday, 2nd February. Though I have not received your weekly letter as usual, I must commune with you as I do every Thursday morning.

There is one pound increase in weight to report this week. The saltless continues. The articles have become stereotyped — paupau, 20 dates, four oranges, two sour limes, four dessert spoonfuls honey, one lb. goat's milk, one dessert spoonful almond paste. Honey I take twice with hot water and ten grains of soda bicarb. Milk in the morning and almond paste in the evening. There is a variation between the paste and ½ lb. milk. This gives you an accurate idea of my food. I began yesterday to take unboiled fresh milk. They say that unboiled milk if fresh and clean is any day preferable to and more digestible than boiled milk. I shall watch the effect of the experiment.

Rajaji tells me that Devadas has discovered himself a most polished and effective speaker. He has just finished his tour in the South for untouchability work.

We are all well.

Love,

2-2-'33 Bapu

Herewith Devadas's speech in Hindi and its translation. It is an extraordinary performance.

P. S.

After all I have your weekly letter but not the intermediate as yet. I have not the time to say more today. I would send you another note in continuation of this. Perhaps it will be allowed as part of this.

God keep you.

2-2-'33 Bapu

चि. मीरां,

Your weekly letter came in in due course. And just two days before that was given to me your special letter describing your condition — whereupon I sent a letter to the Government requesting your transfer to Yeravda and also an examination by specialists. I have done what I thought was my duty to do from every point of view. No prisoner has a right to demand transfer. He has to submit to the conditions in which he is placed except under extraordinary circumstances. When I think of the prison life of Howard's days and I look at today's, I marvel at the betterment in the condition. And yet to prisoners who find themselves in for conscience's sake, there should be no difference whatsoever between that life and this. They must be prepared cheerfully to submit to the life of Howard's days. For to them conscience is dearer than the ease of body and the pleasure of communion through physical means with the nearest and dearest ones. There should be therefore on the one hand every honest and permissible attempt to keep the body in good condition and to obtain the other amenities, on the other to receive disappointment with perfect detachment. You should continue to report the whole of your condition to the Civil Surgeon and give him the history of your previous glands.* I wish you had written about them before to me. Anyway now the matter is in the Government's hands and more in God's hands. "Not a blade moves but by His will."

The passage you quote from the *Gita* refers to moderate habits. That is not what I had in mind. The passage I had in mind occurs in the last chapter 52nd verse. I should translate it thus: "Who prefers solitude, who eats

* When I was fifteen I was operated on for tubercular glands in the neck. On that occasion also sewer gas had been the immediate cause of their swelling.

meagre food, who has under perfect control thought, speech and action; who is intent on meditation, who is free always from attachments."

You have no reason to complain of the quantity of your food. You dare not go by the abstract measurement. Double your quantity would be really meagre, for many of our friends. The condition of your own body should be the sole guide as to the quantity without any reference to that taken by others. All we should recognize is that voluntary meagre eating is one of the most difficult things in the world. It is a perpetual fast much more difficult than the complete periodic fasts. Meagre food voluntarily taken *must* lead to perfect poise i.e. perfect health of body and mind. We can but make the attempt.

My food and weight remain what I described them to be last week. The elbow continues as before. I don't think any more about it. I thought I told you that I had resumed spinning. I did it I think last week Tuesday — I do it whilst I am receiving visitors. I have fixed no minimum. I have not yet reached even 160 rounds. Yesterday's was the highest 141. The count is over 40.

What you say about Devadas is true. His must prove a very happy marriage. Lakshmi too seems to be blossoming. . . .

I am, we are all, just now, very busy over the forthcoming *Harijan*. I have a very good editor and an equally good manager. The press belongs to the Servants of India Society with which I enjoy what may be called spiritual relations. I have therefore not to worry about the details of management. God is great and compassionate, if He is also terrible. Love from us all. It is now 5-15 a.m.

9-2-'33

Bapu

201

चि. मीरां,

I begin this at 3-15 a.m. on Friday. It seems that now I shall get your weekly letter not on Wednesday morning but on Thursday afternoon. It suits me better. For I have no time for personal letters on Wednesdays and Thursdays, both the days being required for *Harijan*. Everything must go out of my hands by 6 p.m. on Thursdays. Hence though I must write on other days as well for H., I must devote Wednesday and Thursday entirely to it. This is almost as before.

The extra note that I thought I might have to write I did not and could not have written without extraordinary effort.

I gather from your letter that you are not locked up for the night. You must take the fullest advantage of that liberty. The best food you want is the freshest air all day and all night. Therefore you should work out of doors during the day, if, as I learn, you have many *neem* trees in your yard. You should sleep all night directly under the sky — not even the shade of the trees — dew or no dew. The most direct contact with the stars is absolutely essential. Dew causes no mischief so long as you are well covered from toe to neck and the head also if necessary and so long as your lips are tightly closed and you are sure that you are breathing only through the nose. To ensure this, at the time of retiring, you should take a few deep breaths through the nose whilst you are lying flat on your back with legs fully stretched. You should set apart certain fixed times, say five minutes each time, for taking these breaths. Then you will acquire the habit of always breathing through the nose. Those who, without practice, think that

they naturally breathe through the nose, are not always right. They don't know when they breathe through the mouth. Unfortunately in the majority of cases correct breathing is an acquired habit. Tuberculosis is an impossibility with one who takes freshest air, drinks pure water, eats properly the proper quantity of the proper food and has proper exercise.

I have thanked the Government for removing you from Arthur Road. They have done it promptly and well. It is true that I had definitely asked for transfer to Yeravda. But they must have their good reasons for not transferring you here. Sabarmati is undoubtedly the next best, knowing you as I do — Sabarmati should be the best if you realized that though my body dwells in Yeravda, my spirit is to be found in Sabarmati. The body without the spirit is like the Taj without Shahjahan — a tomb.

You should have reported all about your glands to the Surgeon at A. R. We may not ask for transfer but we are bound to report our condition. For the authorities hold our bodies in the expectation that we shall report all about their condition to them. If we do not, we commit at least a technical, if not a full breach of prison discipline. You will therefore report every irregularity to the Superintendent who, the Government tell me, is an I. M. S. officer and therefore a fully qualified physician. You should try to make your body 100 per cent proof against disease.

It is a great joy to me that you have Ba with you and Gangabehn and Kusum. Have you no access to the others?

Tell Gangabehn and Kusum that I wrote to both of them. I enclose letters for them and Ba. You will hand them if they are entitled or permitted to have them. There is nothing in them but welfare news.

My weight and food continue as usual and so also the elbows.

With love from us all.

Y. M.,
17-2-'33

Bapu

P. S.

Of course all the instructions I have given in this letter are subject to revision by the Superintendent.

Bapu

. . . .

202

चि. मीरां,

This is Friday morning 3-30 a.m. No letter from you as yet for this week ! I wrote to you regularly last week. That was on Friday as yours was received Thursday afternoon. I take it your new abode and new keepers mean a temporary disturbance in the routine. I shall wait and pray and take to heart the message of *Gitamata*. She is a wonderful mother. I suppose you know that she is called Mother. *Gita* means " Song ". It is used as an adjective applied to *Upanishad* which is in the feminine gender. It has been likened to the sacred cow, the giver of all desires. Hence Mother. Well that immortal Mother gives all the milk we need for spiritual sustenance, if we would but approach her as babes seeking and sucking it from her. She is capable of yielding milk to her millions of babes from her exhaustless udder.

In doing the Harijan work in the midst of calumny, misrepresentations and apparent disappointments, her lap comforts me and keeps me from falling into the Slough of Despond.

So you find me laughing and free from care.

My weight has become steady at 103 and the diet also the same in quantity and kind. For the time being unboiled fresh milk goes on without doing any harm. Writing for *Harijan* occupies most of my time and Mahadev's. Chhaganlal too is kept fairly busy.

No more this time. I must wake up the others for prayer now.

Love to you and the others from us all.

24-2-'33 Bapu

I have just got your letter. But no time to deal with it today. Bapu

203

चि. मीरां,

This is Saturday before prayer time 3-30 a.m. No letter from you till Friday evening. I put off even yesterday in the hope of getting your letter in the afternoon and still posting you something yesterday but that was not to be. So each week your letter is getting later in coming. But though I look forward to it I do not worry.

This letter-writing is not a right of prisoners. Therefore there is no deprivation. What in ordinary life religion calls duty, becomes or seems to be compulsion in the prison life. But that is not the case with us. We are in a way voluntary prisoners. Therefore we may not feel the compulsion as such when certain permission is withdrawn or is regulated in the manner suited to the authorities. I can do without your letters if need be and you must train yourself to do likewise and *feel happy*. In a manner everybody trains himself to do without things when he cannot get them. A follower of the *Gita* dharma trains himself to do without things *with happiness* called equanimity in the

Gita language, for happiness of the *Gita* is not the opposite of unhappiness. It is superior to that state. The devotee of the *Gita* is neither happy nor unhappy. And when that state is reached, there is no pain, no pleasure, no victory, no defeat, no deprivation, no possession. Prison life is a life of privilege if we learn to practise the *Gita* teaching. It is easier in the prison than outside. For outside we have the opportunity of picking and choosing. Hence we are not always able to test ourselves. In the prison there are various jarring occasions. Are we able to bear them with equanimity ? If we are it is well with us.

. . . Ba should look after her jaws.* Does she wear her teeth ? Does she take enough exercise ? Does she do any reading herself ? Does she get weekly letters or fortnightly ? I know last time she did not get several of my letters. I don't know what happened to them. This time I am anxious that she should get my letters. So far as I am aware prison authorities had not withheld her letters.

I do propose to write to Dr. Saunders † about your history. But, whatever the history, there is only one treatment which I have mentioned to you. There need be therefore no waiting for his report. It would be interesting to know what he has to say. Sunlight, simple food in which vitamins have not been destroyed and exercise in the open air will dissolve all glands and other affections. . . .

Here they come for the prayer. 4-10 a.m. I stop.

Love from us all,

4-3-'33

Bapu

* Ba was suffering at that time from looseness of the lower jaw if she did not wear her false teeth.

† My doctor cousin, a Harley Street Physician, who had attended on me from my childhood upwards, in England.

204

चि. मीरां,

It is 3-15 a.m., 11th, Saturday now. The day of my writing to you has become upset owing to the uncertainty of the arrival of your weekly letter. This week I had two from you. Last week's was received only on Tuesday and this week's on Wednesday. But yesterday morning I thought I had still to hear from you and I devoted the morning to writing other important letters. And then when it dawned upon me that there was nothing more to come from you, I would not write to you during what you may call office hours. I love to write this letter and such others in the early morning.

I see that you are once more enjoying the company of birds and animals. Frogs have somehow or other appeared to me helpless creatures. They can't run, they can't fly and thus become an easy prey to the wily cat. And they seem to look at you so appealingly in their helplessness. The monkey on the other hand never excites my pity. He is a most resourceful and mischievous fellow and takes delight in over-reaching you. He has no such thing as thankfulness in him. And yet I suppose all this is imagination or ignorance! If we thrive on knowledge, we seem somehow to do so on ignorance and imagination too. "It is folly to be wise when ignorance is bliss." And the shortest and the oldest *Upanishad* says, "He overcomes death through ignorance and mounts to immortality through knowledge." The original words are अविद्या and विद्या meaning also, respectively, activity and inactivity, body and spirit, attachment and detachment. They can be made to mean several other things without doing violence to the text. It is a very simple and lofty *Upanishad* and is also abstruse. It is an epitome of all knowledge like the *Gita*. The latter is perhaps a commentary on the former. An old commentator or

rather devotee of the *Gita* compares the *Upanishads* to cows, the *Gita* to milk and Krishna to the cow-boy who milks them. But no more of this now.

I hope your progress continues and will not be interrupted by the hot weather which is on us now. Make use of the earth bandage on the forehead or a mere wet rag. It has a wonderfully cooling effect. What cools the head cools the whole body. I came across a potent sentence yesterday in an American book on the eyesight, a book received from Gregg. It says that a lie heats the body and injures the eyesight. It is true if you would give an extended meaning to " lie ". Any departure, conscious or unconscious, from the laws of Nature is a lie. A conscious departure from the known laws is a lie that hurts our moral fibre, not so, or not to the same extent, an unconscious departure. But the body is injured in every case. Writers on *pranayama* claim that the ability to regulate and control breath, enables one to defy changes of climate. The *Gita* seems to lend support to the belief. This is a field that needs reinvestigation in the light of modern knowledge. Kuvalayananda of Lonawala is doing it. Form your lips as you would when whistling and slowly breathe the outside air and you will have an immediate sensation of cooling. When lying flat on the back remember that the muscles of the back do not expand. Hence your breathing must be extra gentle. It is intended to create a soothing effect on the system and relax it and rest it. There is nothing apart from sleep to relieve tension of the mind and body. Therefore the deep breathing should be taken whilst sitting cross-legged with the body erect like a straight board. All these exercises have to be gentle, deliberate and rythmic, always on an empty stomach.

Here the writing was interrupted for prayer and is now resumed after a break of 25 minutes at 4.35.

I have always found Arnold's to be, on the whole, a more helpful translation than any other. " Abstemious " is a wrong word. " Spare diet " is a good expression. अल्प means less than enough. What is enough is a matter of conjecture, therefore our own mental picture. The man of truth, knowing that man is always indulgent to the body, said, in order to counteract the indulgence, that he should take less food than what he would think was enough; then there was likelihood of his taking what in fact was enough. So what we often think is spare or meagre is likely even to be more than enough. More people are weak through overfeeding or wrong feeding than through underfeeding. It is wonderful, if we chose the right diet, what an extraordinarily small quantity would suffice.

I am glad Ba is prospering with you and learning Hindi and making you sing *bhajans*. . . .

My weight now registers 104. The food still remains fruit and milk (raw). I am taking just now less than one lb. of milk. It is the fruit that keeps up my weight. The elbows remain as they are. No cause for anxiety. I have reduced the spinning to a minimum. No fixed quantity. The count just now is anything round 55 and 60. This from *devakapas* carded on Keshu's little invention.

Love from us all,

Bapu

Y. M.,
11-3-'33

205

चि. मीरां,

This is Friday morning 3-15. Your letter came in due time.

I must be brief today as I have many other important letters to write. I have no doubt whatsoever that your progress will continue, if I have succeeded in explaining my instructions about deep breathing and gentle breathing whilst lying flat on your back. With plenty of good *bhaji* constipation must yield. Whilst you have to avoid bread, *paupau* should be taken if available.

I suspended my saltless last week without making any change in the diet. I simply began taking salt with the fruit not more than 30 grains altogether during the day. The only change I can report is that the weight went up yesterday to 105. There has been no increase in milk or fruit. But I am not able to say whether the increase is due to salt. We shall see.

... ...

Love,

17-3-'33

Bapu

206

चि. मीरां,

This is Thursday morning before prayer. Your letter came in yesterday with Ba's.

A book on Astronomy is being sent to you. I enclose also a map for the month. You will find herewith also Dr. Saunders's letter. It is satisfactory on the whole.

Letter for Ba will also accompany this.

You may pursue the conduct of the Ashram as much as you like. It won't tire me. It will assist me. It will enable you to understand my viewpoint better. You must not

accuse yourself of want of faith in me or my wisdom because you do not see a point of mine at once or because having seen it you cannot agree with me. I am not a perfect being. Why should you see eye to eye with me in my errors? That would be blind faith. Your faith in me should enable you to detect my true error much quicker than a fault-finder. What I would like your faith to do is that when you cannot convince me of my error you should think that it is likely that I see more clearly than you do in matters where I have thought and experienced more. That would give you peace of mind. Therefore you should not paralyse your thought by suppressing your doubts and torturing yourself that you do not agree with my view in particular things. You should therefore pursue the discussion of the Ashram till you have the clearest possible grasp of all my ideals about it.

You need not have argued about the man being the worse sinner of the two. I have always held that view against most, if not all my male friends who have expressed their opinion on the point. Of course I agree with you also that man's superiority, if it is that over the brute creation, consists in his capacity for observing *brahmacharya*. It must therefore be an Ashram ideal to be attained immediately if that were possible.

There is therefore complete agreement between us so far as the fundamental thing is concerned. The difficulty or the difference comes in when we begin to devise ways and means of encompassing the ideal.

I am becoming more and more confirmed in the view that it must go on as it is now doing with ample liberty to the manager to regulate fresh admissions. Our life should become daily simpler and not more complex. We should be progressively more self-restrained. But we should remain a composite family that we now are.

The present composition is not the hindrance. The hindrance is that we have so few real complete *brahmacharis*. All were broken vessels, all had their own individual passions to conquer. But I hold that most of them were and are sincere strivers. Therefore we are blind leaders of the blind and ever stumbling. When some of us have, by constant striving, become at least matriculates in the effort, we shall certainly do better. Therefore the problem resolves itself into each one of us striving to the utmost to approach the ideal. Remember my definition of *brahmacharya*. It means not suppression of one or more senses but complete mastery over them all. The two states are fundamentally different. I can suppress all my senses today but it may take aeons to conquer them. Conquest means *using* them as my willing slaves. I can prick the ear drum and suppress the sense of hearing by a simple, painless operation. This is worthless. I must train the ear so that it refuses to hear gossip, lewd talk, blasphemy, but it is open to the celestial music, it will hear the most distant cry for succour from thousands of miles. Saint Ramdas is said to have done so. Then how to use the organs of generation ? By transmitting the most creative energy that we possess from creating counterparts of our flesh into creating constructive work for the whole of life, i.e. for the soul. We have to rein in the animal passion and change it into celestial passion. Read here V.64, Ch. II, of the *Gita*. The burden of the Divine Song is not " fly from the battle but face it without attachment ". Therefore you and I and every one of us have to stand unmoved in the midst of all kinds of men and women. There is no physical seclusion except temporarily for some. The Ashram is all right where it is but we must branch out for larger growth. But that would be a natural evolution coming in its own time.

Love from us all,

27-4-'33

Bapu

we have to rein in the animal passion and change it into celestial passion. Read ~~have~~ here v. 6 & ch 11 of the Gita. The burden of the Divine Song is not "fly from battle but face it without attachment." Therefore you and I and every one of us have to stand unmoved in the midst of all kinds of men & women. There is no physical seclusion except temporarily for some. The Ashram is all right where it is but we must branch out for larger growth. But that would be a natural evolution coming in its own time.

Love from us all

૨૭ ૪ 33

Bapu

(Last passage from the letter of 27-4-'33 written with the left hand.)

207

चि. मीरां,

So you could secure the permission to send me that loving wire. I did not even try. I thought it was better that you suffered in silence than that I should secure special permission to send you a soothing message. Later I shall hope to have the permission to send you and some others daily messages.

You have understood the sacred necessity of the step.* Ba has responded magnificently. Her courage has been a source of the greatest strength to me.

Your letter is before me. Though written before you had any knowledge of the step, I trace in it a sorrowing mood. You have to surmount it. If you have a living faith in a living God, you would feel His never-failing presence protecting you. Till that state is reached even faith in an individual clothed in flesh and bone is not of any avail. It is relying on a broken reed. You should first think this out clearly and then get the heart to co-operate with the intellect.

... ...

Tell Ba not to worry about me at all. She and I and all of us are in His hands. It is well if we live and it is equally well if we die. We are born only to die and we die only to be born again. This is all old argument. Yet it needs

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* Bapu had decided on a purificatory fast of 21 days, which he described as a " heart prayer for purification of myself and my associates for greater vigilance and watchfulness in connection with the Harijan cause ". The Government released Bapu on the commencement of the fast which was continued at Parnakuti, Poona.

to be driven home. Somehow or other we refuse to welcome death as we welcome birth. We refuse to believe even the evidence of our senses, that we could not possibly have any attachment for the body without the soul and that we have no evidence whatsoever that the soul perishes with the body.

I can go on no longer. Visitors have come in.

I hope you received the book on astronomy.

Love,

4-5-'33

Bapu

208

चि. मीरां,

Mahadev is writing this for me, as he will do every day from now, and whenever possible take my signature. You can also write daily and Ba too. I am enclosing a letter for Ba.

You don't need any argument from me. If any is needed you will read it all in today's *Harijan*. It is clear to me as daylight that the fast had to come. I am only surprised that I did not take the decision earlier. I wrestled with myself all these days. The struggle grew acute during the last three days and a little after midnight the voice came clear to me that I must take the plunge. I see what agony you are going through. I knew Ba would be brave. But your joint telegram and your letters have already begun to provide me spiritual sustenance for the pilgrimage. If you want me to come out victorious in the struggle of the spirit with the flesh, you too have to share in the struggle. I know how agonizing the effort is for you, but I know too you will

come out triumphant and help me to be triumphant too. But what is *our* triumph ? As you have rightly begun your letter — and perhaps I wrote the heading of my article just when you wrote those words there — not our will but *His* will be done.

Let me have a line from you both every day.

Y. C. Prison,
6-5-'33

Bapu

209

चि. मीरां,

It is now 3.10 a.m. and I have finished my first letter. That is to Andrews. Not only I but we are all thinking of you. People write to me or speak to me about you suggesting that I should abandon the fast for your sake. It is a great tribute to your love for me but also an unintended reflection. I want myself and every one who knows you to feel that your love is so deeply true and knowing that it can stand the strain of physical separation no matter of what duration. I know that this will come, is coming. It cannot come through reason. It will come through the heart. Essential love depends wholly on the spiritual part, though it at first comes through the sense perception. I want you to feel with me that this fast is a gift greater than God has ever made to me. That I approach it in fear and trembling is a sign of my weak faith. But this time there is in me a joy which I have not known before. I want you to share that joy with me.

Do not therefore deprive yourself of any food. Eat your food thankfully and keep yourself fit for service. Time for you may come when you might have to take up a similar

fast. Under certain circumstances it is the one weapon which God has given us for use in times of utter helplessness. We do not know its use or fancy that it begins and ends with mere deprivation of physical food. It is nothing of the kind. Absence of food is an indispensable but not the largest part of it. The largest part is the prayer — communion with God. It more than adequately replaces physical food.

Mahadev will drop you a line as far as possible daily.

May God give you strength.

Love, Bapu

Letter for Ba herewith.

Y. M.,
8-5-'33

I hope you got my letter written on Saturday. One was sent to Ba also.

210

[The following messages were written by Bapu himself on the letters reporting the progress of his fast :]

You and Ba will get such reports daily. I hope you are bearing up well.

10-5-'33 Bapu

ચિ. મીરાં,

You will be brave to the end. No joke to be my daughter. Being there you have to pass through a more searching ordeal than But then my children to be worthy have to do better than I. Have they not — God be with you ------

Love
Bapu

(Letter written on 12-5-'33 the fifth day of the fast.)

211

चि. मीरां,

You will be brave to the end. No joke to be my daughter. Being there you have to pass through a more searching ordeal than * But then my children to be worthy have to do better than I. Have they not? God be with you.

Love,

Bapu

212

चि. मीरां,

So you have no Ba to look after or to keep company. God is trying you through and through. He will give you strength.†

Love,

14-5-'33 Bapu

213

चि. मीरां,

You are showing wonderful bravery. There is no true bravery to be had apart from complete reliance on God.

Love,

21-5-'33 Bapu

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* In the letter reporting the progress of the fast which accompanied this, the following is written by Mathuradas:

"The lines at the back Bapu penned at about 2 p.m. on Friday. He wrote them without using specs, and hence that incomplete sentence."

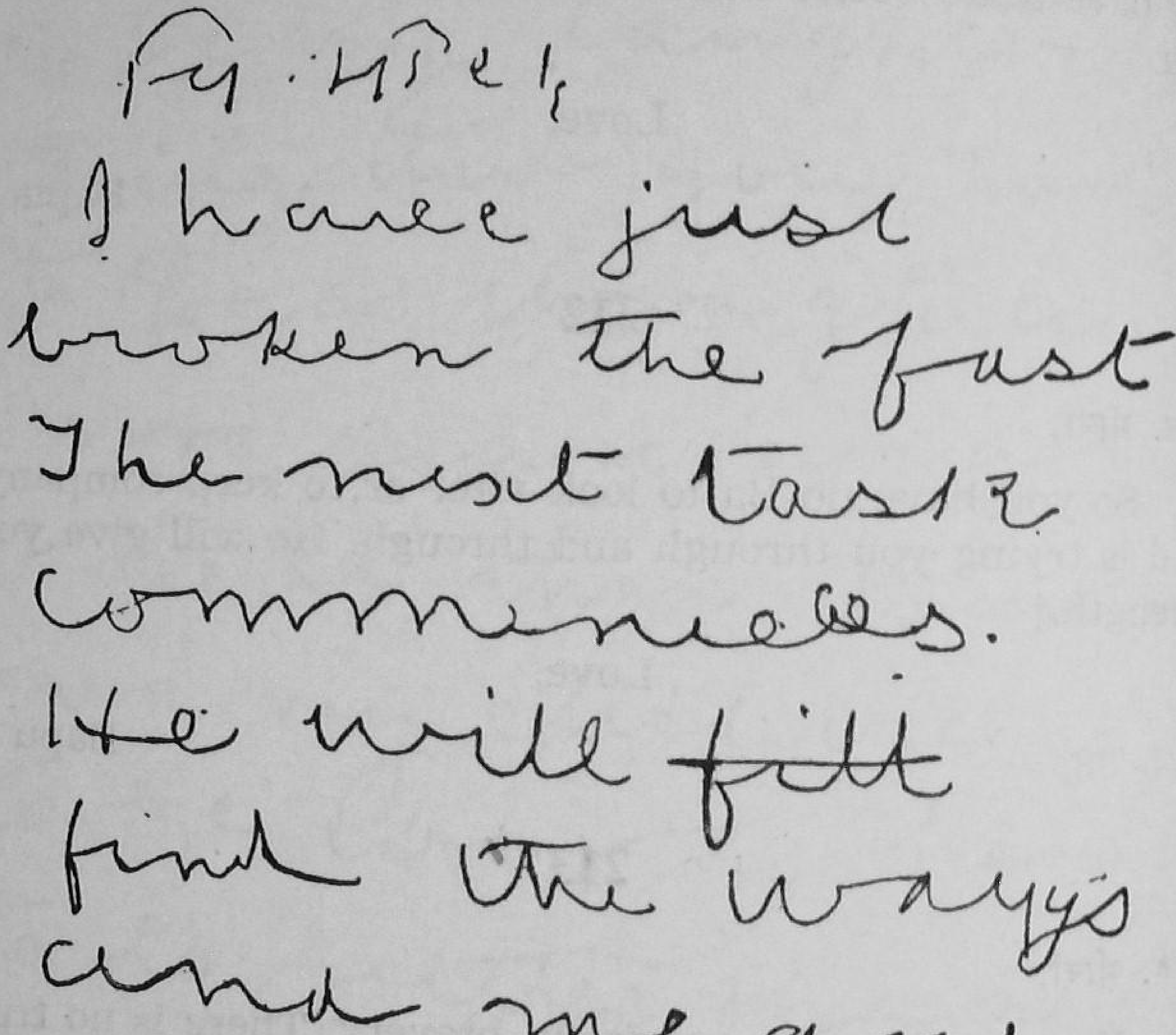
† The Government had released Ba to enable her to go to Bapu.

214

चि. मीरां,

I have just broken the fast. The next task commences. He will find the ways and means.

29-5-'33


चि. मीरां,
I have just broken the fast
The next task commences.
He will ~~fill~~ find the ways and means

215

चि. मीरां,

You *must* try to wean yourself from this longing for physical meeting. I hope the fever is off.

Love,

Poona,
3-6-'33

Bapu

216

चि. मीरां,

This recurrence of fever disturbs me. You ought to learn real self-control. It does not come by reading. It comes only by definite realization that God is with us and looks after us as if He had no other care besides. How this happens I do not know. That it does happen I do know. Those who have faith have all their cares lifted from off their shoulders. You cannot have faith and tension at the same time. Do relax your mind.

Love,

Poona, 5-6-'33

Bapu

217

Dictated

Parnakuti
Poona, 7-6-'33

चि. मीरां,

I must not write. The last letter that I wrote to you caused much strain upon the hand. I am, therefore, dictating this letter in reply to yours of the 5th inst.

You say that the brief sentence I wrote at the end of the letter written by Mahadev gave you pangs. It is wonderful how we create misery for ourselves where there is not even the slightest cause. My sentence had reference to your fever, which you yourself had said was due to over-anxiety on your part. You had explicitly mentioned that you were ill-able to bear the separation.... There was no thought whatsoever that you should live out of sight even when it was possible for you to be with me, that is if we

were both not imprisoned. Of course, in that case, you would be most naturally with me. But to be out of prison is not my natural life. My natural life is that of a prisoner and therefore I suggest that you should learn to do without my physical presence. Is not this as clear as daylight?

I do not like this loss of weight by you. There is something radically wrong in your carrying this load of anxiety on your shoulders. It is incompatible with a living faith in a living God. As days pass I feel this Living Presence in every fibre of my veins. Without that feeling I should be demented. There are so many things that are calculated to disturb my peace of mind. So many events happen that would, without the realization of that Presence, shake me to the very foundation. But they pass me by leaving me practically untouched. I want you to share that reality with me. Then you would not be disturbed because you could not be physically near me. Remember that no heroic effort is necessary in order to be able to bear such enforced separation as you and I have to put up with. Millions of human beings do so without any effort. Do not make the mistake of thinking that they bear such separation because their nature is not sensitive to such things. If we would examine them we would find that they are just as sensitive as you and I are likely to be. Only they have a natural faith in God of which they have not even the knowledge. Ours is, beside theirs, a laboured faith. Hence we have to put forth a Herculean effort to bear separation. Anyway that is my analysis of your mentality. If it is not true you will make your own analysis and somehow or other cure yourself of the terrible anxiety. Carefully ponder over Krishna's discourse in the second chapter of the *Gita*. Then go to the twelfth chapter, and see whether you cannot find real peace and calmness of mind. Do not try to give me a detailed reply to this argument of mine. I do not want you to go through that strain. I have advanced the argument simply to soothe you if at all I can. I know that argument is

vain when one's whole being is in rebellion against itself. Perhaps the painful process through which you are passing is preliminary to the coming realization of the living presence of God. May it be so. Anyway do not again allow the thought to cross your mind that there is any question whatsoever of your having to live in separation from me when we both find ourselves out of prison.

Now about myself. I am flourishing. Rebuilding the body at the age of 64 must be a slow process, and I see that it will be slower than I had expected. Yet recovery is steady. I am taking easily 24 oz. of milk. I am trying to go to 2 lb. and may, under Dr. Dinshaw Mehta's care, do even better. I am entirely satisfied with the way I am progressing. Besides milk I take oranges and juice of 3 to 4 pomegranates. I am taking also a fair quantity of honey, perhaps 4 oz. Up to yesterday I was taking vegetable soup. Dr. Mehta has stopped it from today in order to increase the quantity of milk. So you see there is nothing to grumble at about my food, and the way I am progressing.

You complain of sultry weather. Here we have delicious cool weather. Of course, Poona is ideal in the rainy season.

Devadas will be married to Lakshmi on the 16th ; that is the date when the religious ceremony will be gone through. But as this will be a marriage in breach of the present Hindu usage, there will be also a civil registration on 21st.

. . . .

Love,

Bapu

218

Dictated

चि. मीरां,

Your letter has just arrived. I shall have to be very brief this week, because from 8 o'clock what is called the milk diet commences and lasts till half past three or four. During this perfect bodily and mental rest is required. Yet if I must write this letter in time, I must do so during this milk feed. What this feed is will be described later on by Mahadev. Under it, though I cannot be said yet to be putting on weight, my energy is distinctly on the increase. There is therefore no cause whatsoever for worrying on my account. As far as I can see I may be said to be making steady progress.

I understand what you say about your own health and about the mistake you made in reading my letter. I do hope that your weakness has left you and that there is no fever now left. I am assuming that you will not stint yourself for fruit. Whatever the body needs you should procure and get well and strong.

Love,

Poona,
14-6-'33

Bapu

219

Parnakuti
Poona, 21-6-'33

चि. मीरां,

Your letter of 18th came into my hands this morning.

I have given up the milk treatment, as it is called. But I am taking, after my own fashion, 4 lb. of milk at intervals of 3 hours commencing from 6 o'clock and juicy fruits (oranges, grapes and pomegranate juice). This is likely to suit me better for the time being. My weight has gone up to 93¾ lb. It is a good increase, and I am allowed to walk a few steps daily, three or four times. I had, for the first time after six weeks, a tub bath. It was very refreshing. So you see that there is nothing to worry about so far as my health is concerned. In the milk treatment so-called and in accordance with my height, I should be able to take 12 lb. of milk per day without discomfort. It is a special method and in many cases it is very efficacious. In my case too, ultimately it was expected to succeed but I did not want to engage myself in arguing over it, and therefore, for the moment, I have dropped it. You will be surprised to know that Kakasaheb is undergoing that treatment and is now taking 10 lb. per day and has to come up to 12 lb. His weight has gone up to 120 lb. Brij Kishan, who has been suffering, as you know, for years from habitual constipation, is also undergoing the treatment. He is taking 12 lb. per day without difficulty in quantities of 1 lb. per hour. It is a well tried method. The central point of this method is that whilst you are taking the milk treatment you have got to lie in bed and take perfect rest. You can

take plenty of exercise in the morning before commencing the milk feed.

. . . .

Love,

Bapu

220

Poona,
29-6-'33

चि. मीरां,

It is now 5.30 a.m., Thursday. Your letter is before me.

It makes me glad to think that you are well again and daily gaining strength. We have to acquire the faculty for keeping well under all weathers — a difficult task I know. But it is not beyond human reach. The mind plays a great part in it. If we can completely detach ourselves from the externals in terms of the 6th chapter we can attain that state. That it appears to be beyond our reach for the present need not baffle us. The author of the *Gita* invites us to the effort and says from his abundant experience that it never fails. It may take long but success is a certainty.

Yes, I did not take salt during the fast. It was a virtue of necessity. I simply could not take it. I never attempted it because there was repugnance towards it and there was no necessity for it as there was about soda which therefore I took willy nilly.

My weight yesterday was 97¼ and I walked altogether 44 minutes in three periods without feeling fatigued. It was therefore a good record. Nor is there difficulty about some conversation.

. . . .

Love,

Bapu

221

Poona,
6-7-'33

चि. मीरां,

I have your letter.

My progress is steady. I am now over 98 lb., food continuing as before. I am able to walk three times daily, taking altogether 1 hour 20 mts. — not bad! This gives me no fatigue. I hope you will beat me in competing for good health. No doubt the heat there is against you. But you must have the rains now. And in any case, if you will take the wet sheet pack when the heat is oppressive, you will at once be cool. You know how the pack is taken. Take your bed sheet. Dip it in cold water. Wring it well so that no water is left. Lie naked on the sheet, wrap yourself in the pack. The blanket will cover you from neck to foot. Remain in it for five minutes or longer if you feel comfortable. There should be no chill felt. If there is you should get out of it at once. This is most refreshing and cooling. You can take ths pack frequently if necessary. Try and test it for yourself.

. . . .

Your description of the monkeys is entertaining. Have they not yet snatched your food from you? Of course you know that when they are enraged they can inflict great injury on you.

. . . .

Love from us all,

Bapu

Poona,
13-7-'33

चि. मीरां,

Your letter has come. You can imagine the pressure I am working under. I have taken silence to write this and one or two other important letters and to write for the *Harijan*. I have but a few minutes left to keep an appointment for 9 a.m. God is good to me and He gives me just enough strength to pull through the work before me.

The weight fluctuates ; under the pressure of work it has dropped from over 101 to under 99. So it would continue to fluctuate for some time. I am keeping quite fit.

I want you to beat me in competition for health of mind and body without being anxious about it. What is the use of your adopting me as father and mother and not adding to the heritage you may have received from a double parent ? I really believe that such should be the case where there is reciprocity. And where it is a case of adoption, you don't adopt a parent for his vices and limitations but the virtues you impute to him. Therefore you not only try to imbibe the imaginary or real virtues but add to them. I would like you to prove the law. And I have faith that you will.

Do you know the notable instance of Gorakhnath having outdone his Guru Machchhendranath ?

. . . .

Love,

Bapu

223

Ashram, Sabarmati,
30-7-'33

चि. मीरां,

I am writing this at the Ashram. It is now 8-45 p.m. I hope you were not overexcited after the interview.* You have to put on more weight if you can do so without being ill.

Now that the Ashram is disbanded you will fall back upon Ranchhodbhai for your needs. I have spoken to him.

I must not write more as I have little time at my disposal and my fingers won't give me much more work for the night.

Love,

Bapu

224

[Here again between the last letter and this comes a big gap filled with many events. The very next day after Bapu had been to see me in Sabarmati Jail he was arrested in the evening and sent to Yeravda Jail in order to prevent his intended march to the village of Ras which was to have commenced the following day. The former facilities for serving the Harijans while in jail were this time withheld and, consequently, Bapu commenced fasting. The Government was adamant and Bapu's health was such, owing to the previous twenty-one days' fast, that his staying power was greatly reduced and his condition rapidly deteriorated. My year's imprisonment was just coming to an end. The Superintendent of the Sabarmati jail was very sympathetic and did the best he could which was to release me an hour or two before my term was up, to enable me to catch the early morning train for Poona. I went straight from the jail to the station and all through the journey heard people discussing Bapu's condition and saying he was dying. When I reached Parnakuti I found Ba and

* Bapu had come to see me at the Sabarmati jail.

others ringing their hands and saying, "Bapu will not survive." Ba who had been allowed to see him said, that morning he had refused to take any more water, had distributed his few little belongings amongst his attendants and was preparing for the end. Though I had no grounds beyond instinct to go upon I could only say, 'I feel Bapu cannot be going to die.' That morning Andrews had gone to the jail in the hope of a last moment agreement. We waited in suspense. News came that the Government was releasing Bapu, and in a short while an ambulance conveyed Bapu, accompanied by Andrews, to Parnakuti. Bapu was carried out on a stretcher. Never before or after have I seen Bapu, look so bad as he did then, with the eyes sunk and all colour gone from his face; but even so the spirit remained buoyant. Now followed a period of long convalescence and then the all-India Harijan tour. I accompanied Bapu throughout the whole of the Central and South Indian part of the tour. By the time we had come North again as far as Bombay, an inner urge came to me that I should go to England and speak of Bapu and his message to the people, specially of the working classes. I went straight to Bapu and told him. He said I should go and within 5 days I was on a ship and sailing to Europe. The following letter is the first Bapu wrote to me after my departure.]

चि. मीरां,

What a parting! It was a chilly parting. But I know that I shall never have deeper or richer yet unselfish affection bestowed upon me. That very affection has embarrassed me. But that is a passing phase. May God keep you and bless your effort. You will stay out as long as necessary and return as soon as you can.

Give my love to the sage and his sister. You will not fail to see Effy. My love to her and all the other friends.

I hope your things came in quite in time.

Love,

20-6-'34

Bapu

225

चि. मीरां,

I have your letter and p. c. God be with you. I am in the midst of appointments without break. God be with you. Love from us all.

22-6-'34

Bapu

226

चि. मीरां,

Nothing more beyond sending you a cart-load of love. . . .

29-6-'34

Bapu

227

चि. मीरां,

I am still working against time. Therefore you may not expect a long letter from me. Ch. is writing to you fully. He will describe to you the sad incident * that took place today.

I have several statements about prison treatment. But I have not been able to examine them. Hence there is delay in sending them to Mr. Maxwell.

Love,

Bapu

Ajmer,
5-7-'34

---

* At Bapu's meeting at Ajmer there had been a clash between the sympathizers and a group of Sanatanists, led by Pandit Lalanath, who had dogged Bapu's steps during the Harijan tour, creating disturbances by anti-demonstrations of various kinds. On this occasion they had staged one of their black flag demonstrations, and Pandit Lalanath had got injured in the ensuing scuffle, which occurred before Bapu had reached the meeting. When Bapu heard what had happened he announced his decision to do penance for the breach of non-violence by undertaking a week's fast.

228

चि. मीरां,

You will understand the coming fast. The incident calls for the penance because there was a clear breach of pledge. Nothing on earth is so serious perhaps as breach of pledge of safety. If I had greater capacity I would have taken a longer fast. You must not be disturbed. You should go on with your appointed task, unmoved. Share this with the other friends.

Love to all,

10-7-'34

Bapu

229

चि. मीरां,

This is being written in a moving train.

. . . .

For the whole of August at least I am free. The way before me after is not at all clear. I do not worry. He will show me the next step. Andrews is due on 25th August.

You will keep your health. Please know that I shall not mind if you show no visible result from your visit to England. The experience you will gain is adequate result for me. Therefore you will not be impatient with yourself or your surroundings.

I am keeping quite well. The fatigue is there. But that is inevitable.

Love,

12-7-'34

Bapu

230

चि. मीरां,

Again I am writing this on the train. You must not expect long and informing letters from me. It is enough for me to send you my love from week to week. Chandrashankar does the rest effectively. And now Mahadev is free and so is Vallabhbhai. Pyarelal and Mahadev are with me, also Kaka. Jairamdas too is free but not with me. Now of the principal ones Jawaharlal and Abdul Gaffar Khan remain.

This train is taking me to Calcutta. I am likely to see the Governor and of course Moore.

The coming fast must not disturb you. You will be surprised to learn that the news of the fast has brought to light the names of the men who actually took part in the assault on the black flag demonstration.

. . . .

Love,

Bapu

19-7-'34

231

On the train,
25-7-'34

चि. मीरां,

This is just to tell you, you are constantly with me.

Love,

Bapu

232

चि. मीरां,

This is being written with the vegetable in the one hand and pen in the other. The mailing time is near. So I can only send you love.

Bapu

26-7-'34

233

चि. मीरां,

At 6 a.m. I entered upon the fast. It is now 7 a.m. I do hope that you would not be disturbed during the week. There is no cause for uneasiness. But what is the use of my saying all this ? Ere this reaches the fast would have been twice over.

... ...

Many changes are taking place in my mind just now. The corruption in the Congress is preying on me as it has never before done. I am conferring with friends as to the advisability of leaving the Congress and pursuing its ideals outside it. It is good that the corruption agitates me. I shall take no hasty step, but there it is. And I feel that the girls' institution here should be closed unless I am prepared to sit down in Wardha or Vinoba takes the sole responsibility of its management. He will think over it during the fast. These are the two things that are uppermost in my mind.

The rest you will have from Mahadev or Pyarelal.

... ...

Your work there is certainly voluminous. You are putting forth extraordinary energy. What more can you do? Take your time. Do not get ill.

... ...

Love,

Wardha,
7-8-'34

Bapu

I have not been able to write to Maxwell. Sorry.

234

चि. मीरां,

I wrote to you on Tuesday 7th after commencing the fast. Today is Thursday the third day of the breaking of the fast. The last day was one of physical torture. It was well perhaps it was so. What was the penance worth if it did not cause me any physical suffering? The phrase "joy of suffering" has no meaning if there is no suffering felt. I knew on Monday more fully than before the meaning of the phrase "joy of suffering". I am the richer for the treasure which I would not have missed for a kingdom.

There it was. As I am writing this, I feel the strength slowly coming. I have settled down to this after having walked a few paces on the terrace with Vasumati's help....Prabhavati is of course there. She has slaved during these days. I cannot understand where she gets all the strength from. She seems never tired.

... ...

It is strange you have not been keeping quite fit there. I do hope you are not denying yourself the fresh fruit and salad which are necessary there to keep oneself in a fit condition for strenuous work.

Your account of your visit to your Oxford uncle is entertaining. Somehow or other the oval Italian face * is very attractive to me. Your beautiful description of the baby therefore does not surprise me.

... ...

Love,

Bapu

16-8-'34
Not revised

* The 'oval Italian face' refers to my aunt who, though English, has that type of countenance.

235

Dictated (unrevised)

Wardha,
7th September, 1934

चि. मीरां,

I must not attempt to write to you this week. I have so much to attend to immediately as not to undertake a long letter to you. Mahadev must have written at least. This is just to tell you that I am getting on quite well and working almost full speed. There is nothing to worry about myself.

. . . .

I have the Parliamentary Board and Working Committee meetings before me. . . .Khan Brothers are here and I am having a very nice time with them. To be with them more, is to love them more. They are so nice, so simple and yet so penetrative. They do not beat about the bush.

Love,

Bapu

236

Cablegram
Wardha 22 14 (Sept.) 15-20
Dlt. Miraben, Care Kaloph, London

If Kamlani will, bring him with you. Stay if possible till Andrews * arrival October twentieth.

Love,

Bapu

* This meant waiting another month which I utilized for going to America, even though it meant only two weeks there.

237

Cablegram

Ahcs Bm51 Wardha 13 29 (Sept.) 1100 W
Lc Mirabai care Alexander Woodbrook Sellyoak Bhm.

God light your path. Blessings.* Bapu

238

Dictated

Wardha,
12 October, 1934

चि. मीरां,

I have your letter. But as you were going to America I knew that it was no use my writing to you, and I hardly think that you expected anything from me or any of us in America....I am looking forward to a recital of your experiences in America. It was a good thought on your part to have written to Dr. Holmes and to have gone to America. It was an experience you certainly needed.

I understand your scheme about things in England. We must discuss that when we meet. Therefore I do not propose to give any opinion just now.

Things are shaping themselves here. I do not know what is going to happen. My mind is certainly set on going out of the Congress. I feel quite sure that it will do good to the Congress and to me. I shall better influence the Congress by being outside. I shall cease to be the weight that I am just now, and yet I shall be passing my views on to the Congress whenever occasion demands it. I must not give my time to writing about these things. These have to

* Bapu had just heard of my decision to go to America.

be attended to by Mahadev and Pyarelal. Every minute just now counts.

Love,

Not revised

Bapu

Shrimati Mirabehn.

239

चि. मीरां,

This is my last letter to you whilst you are in the West. The train taking me to Bombay is jolting. You will put yourself in communication with Khan Sahib's daughter and bring her with you if she is at all willing to come.* I do not know what is going to happen to Kamalani. You will buy the ticket for Khan Sahib's daughter. He has paid in the money here and Ambalal's firm is being instructed to pay you more money that may be required for the passage.

Do not be at all disturbed over the events here. Every thing is for the sake of good.

Love,

On the train to Bombay,
20-10-'34

Bapu

240

[On my return from Europe, I joined Bapu at Wardha Ashram. Not long after, Bapu took up residence at Maganwadi, where the Village Industries Association was then taking root. I had remained on there when Bapu wrote the following letter from Borsad.]

चि. मीरां,

We arrived here 5-45. It is now 8-20 a.m. The weather is quite cool. And gentle wind is blowing. Anandi and Bal joined us at Bombay. So we are five. Bal has taken charge of me. There are many old faces here ready to anticipate my wants. So you need have no anxiety on my behalf. I

---

*I brought her back with me.

am quite clear in my mind that it was well not to take you with me. But this is no precedent for the future. And in any case yours is to be the final voice.

I hope you are getting all you need in the shape of fruit. You must not hesitate to order what you want.

Love,

Borsad,
22-5-'35

Bapu

241

चि. मीरां,

... ...

Sindi cleaning must not be omitted even for a day.* But at the same time you must have that silent walk upto the hill.

Sardar has arranged a very light programme for me.

Love,

Bapu

Borsad
26-5-'35

* After we had settled down at Maganwadi, I started going for early morning walks to the neighbouring open country. This led me every day through a small village close by, practically a suburb of Wardha, called Sindi. The inhabitants of this village, both men and women, used the sides of the roads in the immediate vicinity of the village for easing themselves. I happened to mention this matter to Bapu and he immediately said, "It is our duty to teach these people sanitation and if they won't listen but persist in using the public roads, we should clean up the roads ourselves." The villagers proved deaf to all persuasion, so Bapu told me to take bucket and shovel, and any volunteers who would be ready to join me, and daily go to clean the surroundings of Sindi. Day after day I, with two or three friends; went and shovelled up the night soil, not less than three to four bucketfuls, which we emptied into a trench in a field. All visitors who came to Maganwadi, including Europeans were invited by Bapu to join me in this morning task and, as far as I remember, nearly all did. The villagers seemed to enjoy it as a joke, and continued day in and day out to soil the lanes.

242

चि. मीरां,

I have your two fine descriptive letters. They show how much you need these solitary walks for self-expression.* You must have them more frequently if not daily. I am writing against mail time. 2 lb. of milk, two tolas *neem*, big bowlful of local mango juice and lemons is my staple here. The weather here is undoubtedly much cooler than there. We are only 15 miles from the sea.

Love,

27-5-'35

Bapu

243

चि. मीरां,

From your description of the weather there, Borsad is heaven. The evenings and mornings are delightfully cool. Wardha must be a furnace day and night. Whatever it is, if all goes well you will find us there on 2nd June.

Amtul Salam has to be allowed to grow her own way. She is a wonderful girl — a freak of nature. If she lives long, she is likely to become a first-class servant of humanity.

Love,

Borsad,
29-5-'35

Bapu

* From my childhood I have loved solitude and nature. Without them something in me starves. Wardha was the first place where I got a chance of solitary walks in the open countryside.

244

[Between the last letter and this there comes another eventful gap. For sometime I was serving Bapu in Maganwadi. Bapu's health had become very bad and high blood pressure had developed. At the same time Maganwadi had become overcrowded with inmates of all descriptions. The problem of Sindi village was continuing unsolved and Bapu suddenly announced that he intended to go and live in Sindi all alone, taking what help he required from the villagers. Everyone was aghast at the idea, specially in view of Bapu's state of health. I asked Bapu that if I went instead to Sindi, would he accept the compromise. Bapu reluctantly agreed. A small one-room cottage was built and I went there to live. I felt that Sindi was no village and that our experiences of, and experiments with regard to, village life could not really be carried on there. I, therefore, suggested that as soon as someone else would be found ready to stay in Sindi, I would go on to a real village in the countryside. The following letter was addressed to me in Segaon which was the village I had gone on to from Sindi.] :

Dictated. Maganwadi,
29-11-'35

चि. मीरां,

The bearer of your note is in a hurry to go. Your note was read as soon as it came. The reply is being dictated immediately after the reading. The things wanted will be sent tomorrow with the bearer who will bring tomorrow's note. The idea of cow-keeping is good. If there is none there, I could perhaps send one from here. She will be a good companion for you and provide you with good occupation. Meanwhile you should take such milk as you get there. Are there any goats there ? If there are you should possess a few goats on loan. You should take as much ghee as you need and fall back on Maganwadi for supply. I am glad the first experience has been so happy. All well here.

Love,

Bapu

245

चि. मीरां,

So you are laid low.* I hope you will soon be well and return to your post. You may certainly seek the solitude of the hills. I am making steady progress in spite of the blood pressure. I think I have discovered the cause of the present increase. But I shall know more on Wednesday. There is no cause for anxiety. I am allowed plenty of exercise and solid food.

Love,

Bapu

[Bapu had been taken to Ahmedabad for change.]

246

चि. मीरां,

Your letter relieved me of all anxiety. I hope you will be able to keep the promise not to brood over the past mistakes but look hopefully to the future, not to repeat them. I am sure you will be quite all right if in coming to decisions you never think of what others will say. Consult the Dweller within and He will never fail you. I am making steady progress. Doctors come tomorrow. You shall have their opinion.

Love,

Ahmedabad,
8-2-'36

Bapu

* Fever again.

247

[A tremendous struggle was going on within myself. My greatest longing was to live in a village with Bapu. To get into the villages had been my desire ever since the days of Sabarmati, but I had always been torn between the longing for the countryside and the longing to be with Bapu. Now I had hoped that the time had come when the two longings could be fulfilled. The situation however became very painful. If living in Segaon was to mean perpetual separation from Bapu, my health and nerves would not be able to endure it. Already my health was giving way under the strain which was seriously aggravated by other people telling me that if I did not stay permanently in Segaon, Bapu's blood pressure would get worse. When Bapu became aware of the fact that my nerves were giving out, he said, if I could not live in Segaon he would himself go there. But then he would go there on the same terms as he had contemplated for Sindi, i.e., to live alone without any of his old workers, and I must go to a neighbouring village. This nearly broke my heart, but somehow I managed to carry on, and when Bapu finally decided to come and live in Segaon, I buried my sorrow in the joy of preparing for him his cottage and cowshed. For myself I built a little cottage a mile away on the ridge above Varoda village, and within a week of Bapu coming to live in Segaon I departed for the hut on the hill where I lived alone with my little horse as my companion. Other workers, however, did not leave Segaon and Bapu was never able to achieve his object of being alone; but on the contrary his cottage became so overcrowded that after a time there was no room left for Bapu himself.]

चि. मीरां,

I see you dread going to Segaon. Don't if you do not have the urge. You know the verse in the *Gita* निग्रहः किं करिष्यति? What will compulsion avail? This is compulsion against oneself. Resistance up to a point is a duty. It becomes compulsion when the urge and the joy is lacking. All resistance is good and obligatory so long as it gives us strength. But when one is exhausted with every effort, be sure it is compulsion which must be avoided. The evil with you is that you have compelled yourself against your will to do certain things. This is an untruth. Therefore do not

go to Segaon unless you feel you must and will be miserable if you did not go.

Is this quite clear? Kanti and Kanu are looking after me with great diligence and care.

Love,

13-2-'36 Bapu

248

चि. मीरां,

I have your letter. I do not think you have quoted me correctly. But that does not affect your argument. My letter of yesterday anticipates most part of your argument and answers it. I do not think you need go * to Segaon by way of penance. You should go there only if you cannot be happy otherwise. Whilst I am in Maganwadi you can render all the personal service you like, only letting Ba share what she likes. When I go to Segaon, as I must, if you are not there, nobody of the present company can be with me. I must make new friends and coworkers in Segaon. You can settle in any other neighbouring village if you like, so as to be near me. I do not contemplate much travelling, certainly none outside India in the near future. "I do not ask to see the distant scene, one step enough for me." My heart is in the villages. I want an excuse for going there. Of my own volition I lack the courage to go or to combat the arguments of friends. But if you can persuade yourself to leave Segaon, as soon as I return from my convalescence, I would love to go to Segaon, not as any punishment to you, but as a welcome God-given opportunity for going to a village. The rains won't worry me in the slightest degree. I should find for myself all the comfort I may need there. Hence I

* I was in Segaon temporarily putting up in an old bullockshed in Jamnalalji's *bagicha*. By "go" Bapu meant settle down.

would like you not to disturb yourself on my account. You should go to Segaon only if you feel the impulse to do village work. If you do not, you should quietly settle down in Maganwadi. Your hut is there. If you need better arrangement, you have but to ask. In fine, you must do nothing in violation of the inner voice, whatever it may be. I am getting on. Yes, we halt for two days at Bardoli, reaching there on 23rd D. V.

Love,

Ahmedabad,
14-2-'36

Bapu

249

[By this time I had built for myself with the help of the villagers a tiny hut in the village.]

चि. मीरां,

... ...

Of course every intimate contact with the real villagers in their villages gives us new knowledge and new hope, though it also shows us the difficulties in our path. My heart is there. What my effort will end in I do not know.

... ...

Love,

14-3-'36

Bapu

250

चि. मीरां,

Your 3rd letter has arrived. I am delighted you have a horse. Never mind the cost. They will allocate it as they think best. You should do everything gently and take rest while the sun is blazing. All work before 10 a.m. and after 4 p.m. during summer. You should take more fruit than you do. Cold bandage on the head is a necessity. Earth retains the cold longer than the mere wet bandage.

The weather is now getting steadily warmer. It is nearing 3 p.m. and I have nothing to cover the body. I can bear the *pankha*.

... ...

Love,

Delhi, Bapu
16-3-'36

251

[During the hot weather which had now begun, I returned to the *bagicha* and lived, under some trees, with a little matting arranged for extra protection.]

चि. मीरां,

Yours this time is a revealing letter. What you say about the well on J.'s farm is disturbing.* But it merely shows the tremendous difficulties we have in our way. In the midst of all these you must keep well and calm, even as I am trying to do. For you might imagine that it cannot all

* Caste Hindu villagers were objecting to Harijans using the well.

be plain sailing for me here. I am having difficulty about the political part as also the village settlement part.

. . . .

Love,

Bapu

Delhi,
20-3-'36
4 a.m.

252

चि. मीरां,

Your letter disturbs me in more senses than one. You are not yet well. If life in Segaon does not suit you, you must leave in time and not as you had to in Bihar where there was a collapse. I may or may not know my limits. But you certainly do need to be cautioned, again and again. You must not become a wreck. And may this illness again be due to separation from me, though this time there are no such antecedent circumstances as there were last time.

. . . .

Love,

Bapu

Delhi,
23-3-'36

253

चि. मीरां,

All your letters arrived here in due order.

The weather here too has been unsteady. We had storms and rain. Let us hope we shall have settled weather till the rains overtake us.

The dates I have given you still abide. We leave here on 7th reaching Lucknow on 8th morning.

At Anand Bhavan I have the same room, the same surroundings without Motilalji and Kamla — big gap. Old mother is almost inconsolable. She is broken down in health. Her bravery persists.

You will keep your health at all cost. I am so glad you have Sejila.* He must be a boon.

Yes, I envy you your life just now. My mind is in the villages though the body thrives in the cities.

Love,

Allahabad, Bapu
5-4-'36

254

चि. मीरां,

... ...

Segaon is on the brain. Jamnalalji is half converted.†

It is a great joy to me that in Sejila you have found a faithful and intelligent companion. I dread your nightly adventures.‡ I know it is wrong to do so. We are all in His keeping. But I am anxious for you to avoid all mishaps which can be anticipated. I expect to find you hale, hearty and joyful.

... ...

Love,

13-4-'36 Bapu

We are all fasting today. I have just broken mine.

* My horse.
† To Bapu's going there.
‡ Coming home in the dark over the long country roads.

255

चि. मीरां,

Jamnalalji has given full authority to commence building operations.* If you come on tomorrow evening or 23rd morning I could explain everything. I leave for Nagpur 23rd evening returning 26th evening or 27th morning at the latest.

More when we meet.

Love,

21-4-'36

Bapu

256

[Bapu was planning to come to stay for a few days in my camp under the trees in order to choose the exact site of his cottage and give me detailed directions as to how it was to be built.]

चि. मीरां,

If it is possible the boiling pot will accompany the messenger. If not, it will go with me. Ba is not quite well. Are there any goats in Segaon ? † If there are, I do not want to bring any with me.

Love,

Bapu

27-4-'36

---

* For Bapu in Segaon.

† A goat was kept ready, tied up under the trees along with my horse and cow.

257

चि. मीरां,

I shall bring the necessary things with me. I cannot come tomorrow. The W. C.* is still sitting and I cannot leave so long as the members are here. In no case shall I have uninterrupted 10 days there. I must be here on Sunday and also for 1st and 2nd May, if Dr. Ambedkar † comes.

. . . .

Love,

28-4-'36

Bapu

258

चि. मीरां,

God willing I am coming tomorrow. The paper is being sent. More when we meet. I expect to be with you at about 7 a.m.

Love,

Wardha,
29-4-'36

Bapu

259

चि. मीरां,

Your sweet letter. I leave by the Grand Trunk after 6 p.m. I had a long talk with J. about the road through the village. His mind is working on it. Do keep yourself perfectly well and cheerful. Do not overwork yourself even though my cottage remains unfinished.‡ No fretting.

* Working Committee of the Indian National Congress.

† Dr. Ambedkar did come but saw Bapu in Segaon under the trees.

‡ The building of the cottage and cowshed was now in full swing. There were only six weeks in which to complete the cottage, the cowshed, the road and my hut on the hill. Balwantsingh, Munnalalbhai and myself worked at full speed from daybreak to night. Even so,

I hope you got the rammers.

Love,

8-5-'36

Bapu

260

चि. मीरां,

I have your letter. Yes, it is very delightful here. My personal love wishes you were here to share with us the quiet and isolation of this beautiful hill; my impersonal love tells me you are better off where you are, for it is the post of duty....

Dr. Ansari's death was a great shock to me. I have hardly got over it yet. I feel the want of his presence in so many things.

I am glad you are making good progress with the hut. I understand what you say about the road. You will do what is the best. I have implicit faith in your judgment in these matters.

Balwantsingh and Munnalal must not be a burden on you in any shape or form. I enclose notes for them.

I hope by the time this reaches you, the land in Varoda * will have been taken.

Love,

Nandi Hill,
14-5-'36

Bapu

---

rains began before we had fully completed everything. But the house was inhabitable when Bapu arrived in pouring rain to take up residence on the 16th of June.

* On the ridge above the village, for my cottage.

261

चि. मीरां,

I hope you got my letters from Nandi.

Yes, Dr. Ansari's death is a great personal loss. Both birth and death are great mysteries. If death is not a prelude to another life, the intermediate period is a cruel mockery. We must learn the art of never grieving over death, no matter when and to whom it comes. I suppose that we shall do when we have really learnt to be utterly indifferent to our own, and the indifference will come when we are every moment conscious of having done the task to which we are called. But how shall we know the task ? By knowing God's will. How shall we know the will? By prayer and right living. Indeed prayer should mean right living. There is a *bhajan* we sing every day before the *Ramayana* commences whose refrain is " Prayer has been never known to have failed anybody. Prayer means being one with God."

I am glad you are making progress with the buildings. Rs. 300 for the land and building in Varoda should prove enough for the time being at any rate. I wish you would be able to squeeze in the fence. There need be no paid labour for it. Balwantsingh and Munnalal should be able under your direction to put it up. The material should cost practically nothing. Fence and some shade is the chief thing. . . .

. . . .

Love,

Nandi Hill,
18-5-'36

Bapu

262

[I had gone down with a severe attack of malaria. My temperature rose to 105 and the weather temperature had gone up 118. I was still living under the trees, now with Balwantsingh and Munnalalbhai. When people wanted to take me away to Wardha I resisted strongly, as I felt much more at home with the trees, the horse and the cow, than I should with a town bungalow.]

चि. मीरां,

My heart is with you though my body is here. I had expected a word from you but I have one from Radhakrishna. His letter contemplates bringing you to Wardha. I hope it was not necessary. Of course, whatever is thought necessary for quick recovery must be done. You must not allow the building programme or anything else to prey on your mind. Without good health you can carry out no programme. I look forward to tomorrow bringing good news.

Love,

Nandi Hill,
22-5-'36

Bapu

We descend to Bangalore on 31st.

263

चि. मीरां,

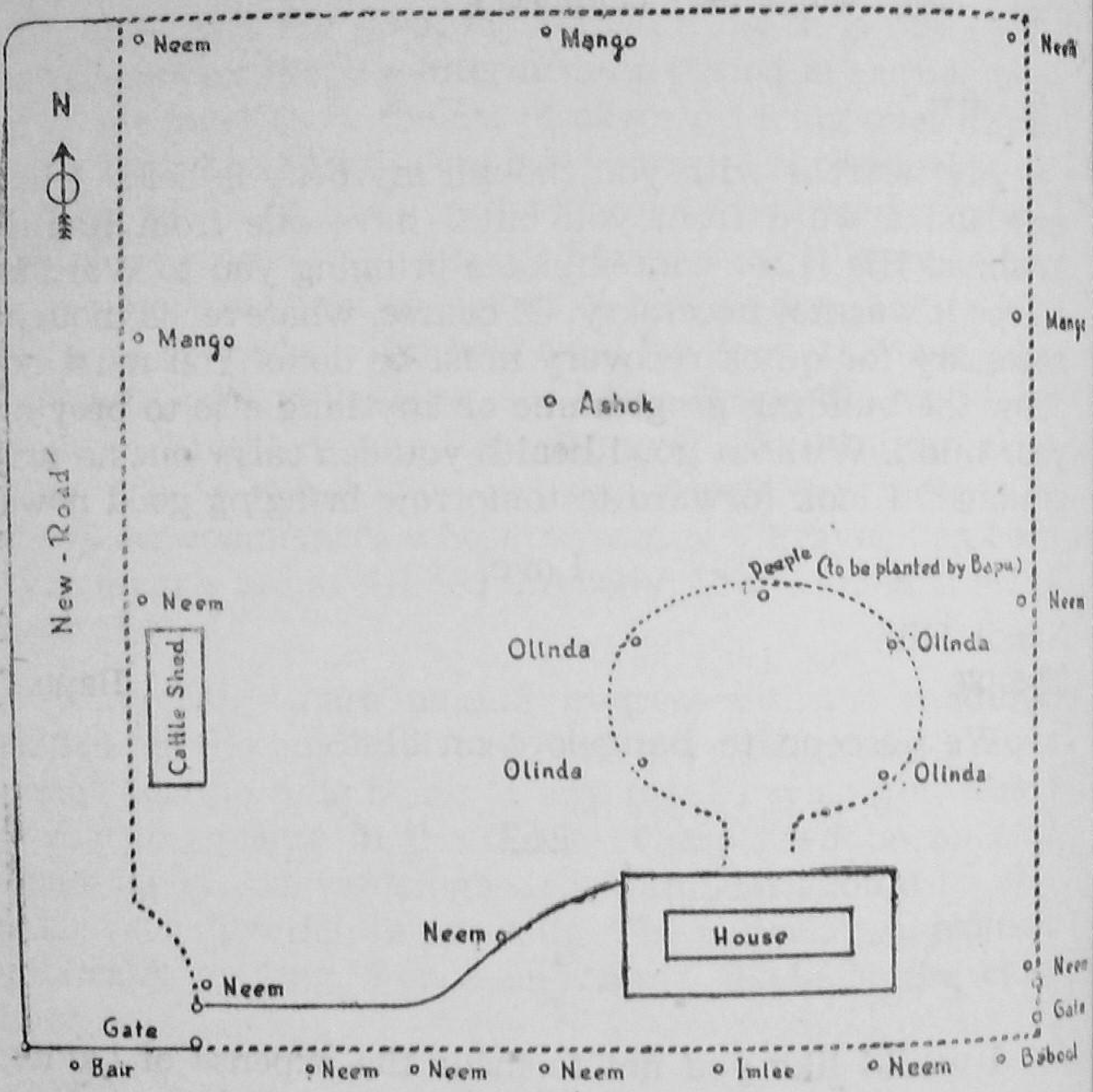
... ...

I would like you not to incur the expense of having partitions made. I would like to improvise them as they may be needed almost like what Chhotelal had arranged for my bathroom, you will remember. As it is I dread the cost of the hut. I hope Divanji is keeping within the limits prescribed by me. The plinth, four walls and a waterproof roof with open verandah and fence round is the indispensable minimum. But you are giving me in addition a kitchen

and bathroom and a stable.* Let the other additions wait till after my arrival.

Love,

24-5-'36 Bapu



* Cow-shed.

264

चि. मीरां,

Your two letters, 23rd, 24th, came in today.

Of course if you are happier and better in Segaon, you will go there. You must have rest and the food you want. ...I return the maps.* No corrections. You have thought the thing out well and it stands.

No more today as I am anxious to catch the post just now going.

Love,

26-5-'36 Bapu

265

चि. मीरां,

I gave a hurried reply yesterday to your two letters. I returned also the two plans for the fenced yard. I did not examine your maps critically, as I regard your judgment to be superior to mine. You have a natural faculty for these matters.

I think I have already told you that Mahadev's hut need not be thought of just yet. I want first to feel my legs, before incurring the expenses of further buildings. It is wise to move slowly. The experience of fine days shows that contact can be retained even while Mahadev & Co. are in Maganwadi. This is merely said to justify cautious movement.

... ...

The storm you describe is an indication of what things can be in the villages in the rainy season. Perhaps the

* I had drawn two alternative plans for the lay-out of the buildings, prayer ground and compound. A facsimile of the plan chosen is given on page 288.

things were better in Segaon because it is not on an eminence as Ponnar is. Every position has both its advantages and disadvantages. It is better therefore not to make elaborate plans about things which are themselves unenduring.*

Love,

27-5-'36 Bapu

266

चि. मीरां,

So you are in Segaon already. I do not mind. If you get there the comforts you need, it will be where your heart is. If you get the rains, of course there can be no building. Therefore let all labour that can be used be given to the walls and the roof. If these are ready and the walls dry, the rest can be finished even after the rains. But I am not going to worry if in spite of all effort, the building is not ready for occupation by the time we return. No strain should be put upon your weak body.

Love,

29-5-'36 Bapu

267

चि. मीरां,

. . . .

I have your letter of 28th.

Of course you will incur the expense of a latrine. It may be well to rig up a bath room also side by side as we had in Sabarmati.†

---

* While I was building Bapu's mud cottage, a pucca brick bungalow happened to be being prepared for Jamnalalji at Ponnar. In the severe storm referred to, the little mud cottage stood firm and the brick bungalow collapsed with a crash.

† For my cottage.

I would not want you to go to a seaside, if your hut on an apology for a hill serves the same purpose.

I hope we shall reach Wardha on 15th June Monday, if not on 14th. My effort would be to reach there on a speaking day. That can only be Sunday. But if I cannot manage it, I shall be satisfied to reach there even on Monday.

You must have by now heard about Harilal's acceptance of Islam. If he had no selfish purpose behind, I should have nothing to say against the step. But I very much fear that there is no other motive behind this step. Let us see what happens now.

We descend to Bangalore city tomorrow.

Love,

Bapu

Nandi Hill,
30-5-'36

268

Dictated

चि. मीरां,

... ...

The Gujarati papers are full of Harilal's exploits.

If you will be in local Simla,* there will have to be a local line to it too. And there will have to be variation in the two temperatures to attract me !

Love,

Bapu

Bangalore,
1-6-'36

* The cottage on "an apology for a hill".

269

चि. मीरां,

. . . .

I do not like the idea of bringing the commode and pot or the desk from Wardha. For commode there should be a stool with the middle open and a half tin or a bucket or some such thing. For pot we may use a bottle or keep a village metal pot, for desk something quite cheap and serviceable made in Segaon. There need be no hurry about these things. If you have not quite understood what I want, you may wait till I return. Wooden bedstead may be brought, lota also. Stool should be rigged up there. Another cow will be necessary. Consult Chhotelal about it.

. . . .

You may expect Lilawati by the time this reaches you. The accompanying is for her.

Love,

6-6-'36

Bapu

270

चि. मीरां,

Yours of 3rd just to hand. Yes, Sejila should have a shed by himself, so as to leave your verandah free. On second thoughts I think it will be wise to bring the commode and the pot from Maganwadi for European visitors. Therefore this is in addition to the plan suggested by me.

If you get hold of peacocks, I do not mind. But I know nothing of their habits.

Love,

Bapu

271

चि. मीरां,

This will be perhaps my last letter from here. We hope to be in Wardha on 14th inst.

Cartmen seem to be having a fine time there. 50 carts working at a single job simultaneously must be a record for Segaon. I hope they were all local. I expect to see you hale and hearty.

Evidently Balwantsingh and Munnalal were a God-send for you. When I felt like accepting Munnalal's offer and suggested to Balwantsingh to seek your unbroken contact (सत्संग), I had no notion you would find them almost indispensable. Anyway their being with you during your illness and convalescence was a source of great comfort to me.

The Madras basket contained apples. Did you have them ? They were all from Janammal.

Love,

Bapu

B. Lore,
9-6-'36

272

[On the early morning of the 16th, it was pouring in torrents and we three (Balwantsingh, Munnalalbhai and myself) felt practically sure that Bapu would not come until the rain eased off. As the newly-built mud cottage was still very damp, we busied ourselves with lighting charcoal stoves and placing them in the corner where Bapu was to sit when he came. Suddenly, in the midst of our operations Bapu himself walked in, drenched to the skin.]

चि. मीरां,

We arrived here at 8 p.m. The train was late. I have your letter. My mind is there. But my body must be here

till Monday for 'Harijan's' sake. If the weather is good, I hope to be with you on Tuesday morning about 7.30 a.m. I shall have taken milk on the way. I do not know who will be with me if any at all. We shall see. Do not worry. I quite see that till the things have shaped, you will have to be in Segaon. Be careful for nothing. If some one is at the gate to show me the exact way to take, it would be good. It may be Govind or Dashrath * (is that the other comrade's name ?). But it does not matter, if no one can be spared. Some fruits will go with this. . . .

Love,

14-6-'36

Bapu

273

[Bapu was now in his cottage at Segaon and I in mine on the hill.]

चि. मीरां,

This is merely a love letter. Nothing to say except that I am praying for your relief. Do not make any experiments, is the lesson to be learnt from this new experience.†

274

चि. मीरां,

If there is no satisfactory clearance, why not castor oil or epsom salt ? If you need any other opening medicine, I can send it. Shall I send any vegetable from here ?

Love,

30-6-'36

Bapu

* Two Harijan villagers.

† As far as I can remember, I had tried eating a wild plant, *Panwar*, as vegetable which the villagers had recommended.

275

चि. मीरां,

Yours is a good report. It is raining here. I am going to try to come on 5th. 6th is the real date.

Love,

1-7-'36 Bapu

276

चि. मीरां,

No one understands what message the bearer has brought. Lilawati is too careless to understand. I can't speak *. Munnalal is half dead. B. threatens to follow suit. In these circumstances, it is better to write out what you want. This has become a confused household instead of a hermitage it was expected to be. Such has been my fate ! I must find my hermitage from within.

Love,

Bapu

20-7-'36

277

चि. मीरां,

I hope the progress will continue.† If there is any complication, you will at once let me know.

Love,

Bapu

10-8-'36

* being silence day.

† I had been having fever.

278

चि. मीरां,

The dinner bell has gone. You will not stir out today. I am coming. You shall come to Segaon tomorrow.*

Love,

16-9-'36

Bapu

279

[Bapu had gone to Banaras at the request of Shivprasad Gupta to open the Bharata Mata Mandir which he had constructed. I was convalescing in Segaon.]

चि. मीरां,

I have not been able to write to you before now. I have just got good news from Munnalal about you both. I hope you are well both in mind and body. It is a matter of joy that our weaknesses exhibit themselves as a warning to us. Therefore the memory of the last day's incident should bring you joy only.

Love,

Kashi,
26-10-'36

Bapu

* Intermittent attacks of fever had reduced my health to a very bad state and Bapu had me brought down to Segaon in a bullock cart. I began to improve in health but before long Nanavati who was there went down with typhoid and Balwantsingh was down with very bad malaria. I started helping to nurse them and myself collapsed with typhoid. This period, though it meant two weeks of high temperature, severe headache and no sleep, remains in my memory as one of the most wonderful and blessed periods I have ever been through. There were no women in the establishment and Bapu, not wishing to call in any, undertook my nursing himself. In the beginning I protested, but the fever soon left me no strength and I gave myself up to the infinite care and tender love which Bapu bestowed on me day and night. As a result of that nursing, there were no complications and I came out of the fever on the fourteenth day.

280

चि. मीरां,

This is my 2nd letter during travelling and only to tell you that you are never out of my mind. Hope the progress of both continues.

I had a very busy day in Delhi doing quiet work. Ba is with us, Manu remaining with Devadas. It is delightfully cool in Delhi just now. Devadas is much better.

Love,

On the train, Bapu
28-10-'36

Tomorrow Rajkot. 30th Ahmedabad.

281

चि. मीरां,

Your two letters before me. You have to live down the hottest tempers if you are to express *ahimsa* in your life. It makes no difference whether the temper is directed towards you personally or towards your wards or dear friends. . . .

Love,

Tilaknagar, Bapu
26-12-'36

282

चि. मीरां,

I had your two letters received last night at the Cape — the end of the earth.* And I had reply by wire to my telegraphic inquiry about you, Shanta and Kumarappa. I hope you showed your foot to the C. S.† I am anxious about

* Bapu is on South Indian temple-entry tour.
† Civil Surgeon.

it. You have severe cold there and we here melt on the slightest pretext. I hope you are at peace with yourself. . . .

Love,

Cape Comorin,
15-1-'37

Bapu

283

चि. मीरां,

I have your two long letters. I understand what you say in them. I do not know that I shall be able to give more time to the village work than I am giving. My life has to be taken with its amazing limitations. It is enough that I live in the village and think out things in terms of the village. I must act as opportunity comes.

I do not mind Harijans working in the kitchen. Of course the attitude towards them has to be progressively as towards members of the same family. I am satisfied that that attitude is there. It only requires growing emphasis.

. . . .

Love,

20-1-'37

Bapu

284

चि. मीरां,

The weather here is superb just now. It always is during March and part of April.

Hope you will win Vijaya's heart. I shall never be able to give you a better girl. And you must not pamper Kandu and other boys.* They are done for if they develop the tender skin that you and I have the misfortune to possess. . . .

Love,

Harijan Niwas, Kingsway,
Delhi, 15-3-'37

Bapu

* Harijan village boys.

285

चि. मीरां,

I hope you had no difficulty in reaching Dalhousie * and that you were met at the respective stations. How I wish, you would be thoroughly restored and return with the body thoroughly renewed ! You won't overstrain yourself in your anxiety to get well soon.

No more today.

Love,

Segaon (Wardha), Bapu
13-6-'37

286

चि. मीरां,

I imagine your having just reached or just reaching Dalhousie. Subhash Babu has given ample instructions regarding the route, expenses and timings. It is a perfect letter. Raizada Hansraj wired offering to take you in, but I have wired you would be with Subhash Babu. And with the latter you would get good medical aid. I shall expect a wire today from you.

The heat is still oppressive here. I have dropped bread altogether.

Love,

Bapu
15-6-'37

* I had gone to Dalhousie where Bapu had sent me on account of bad health. I stayed at the house of Dr. and Mrs. Dharamvir, where Subhash Babu was also staying at that time.

287

चि. मीरां,

Your letter has just come. I hope the mountain air will set you right. Here is note for Dr. Dharamvir. My love to Subhash Babu to whom I have no time to write separately.

You will be grieved to know that yesterday the rain set in but destroyed the earth work near the creak bridge,* nearly destroyed the houses on either side. If the rain had continued for five minutes longer the houses would have gone. Now I am considering what to do.

Khansaheb and Mehrtaj † came today.

No more time to say more.

Love,

Segaon, Wardha,
19-6-'37

Bapu

288

चि. मीरां,

I have just had your 2nd letter from Dalhousie. I had not expected any magical performance in Dalhousie. But you will recover there completely by patience. Don't insist on your way if Doctor advises otherwise, of course barring vows. But there are no vows except the abstention from meats and wines.

No rain here to speak of. The weather has cooled a bit. Ba is expected to return by 24th. . . .

---

* A small bridge had been built over a *nala* in Segaon village which resulted in checking the flow of surface rain water, and consequently the mud-cottages on the banks of the *nala* were nearly washed away.

† Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan's daughter.

Balwantsingh has a mania for building. The cowshed is complete, but the huge yard is taking up time and space and money. Let us see.

Love,

Segaon, Wardha,
21-6-'37

Bapu

289

चि. मीरां,

Your drawing is good.* Do continue the practice. It would be good recreation for you.

Dr. Dharamvir again warns me that you should hasten slowly. He is confident of effecting a radical cure.

... ...

The rains set in properly yesterday. The weather is now quite cool. Wind is blowing strong.

... ...

Balwantsingh and Parnerkar have gone to buy cows. Three will presently go dry.

My goat is giving very little milk. So we have to procure a goat too. Thus the family grows all round.

Love,

Bapu

Segaon, Wardha,
29-6-'37

* I used to send Bapu small sketches along with my letters.

290

चि. मीरां,

You will understand absence of letters from me during these days. Your drawings I like very well. Hope you are flourishing.

...Kandu and 4 or 5 others * come from Varoda to spin. They are being paid by Nalwadi according to the Nalwadi scale. They are happy. So you see the seed sown by you has sprouted and may bear ample fruit. No more today.

Love,

Bapu

Segaon,
5-7-'37

291

चि. मीरां,

I have not been able to write to you lately. Your letters and sketches have been coming in regularly. I have sent them on to Nandlalbabu for his opinion. You shall know it when it comes.

... ...

I am glad the Doctor has allowed you to go to the simple diet. The nuts are not for you.

Love,

Segaon, Wardha,
10-7-'37

Bapu

* Village boys whom I had been training.

292

चि. मीरां,

I have your long letter. You must not worry about coming here. You should become proof against the visitations of malaria or other illness. It is pouring cats and dogs. Of course I am thinking out all kinds of things for villages. But you should also think out things.

... ...

Love,

12-7-'37

Bapu

293

चि. मीरां,

I have your disturbing letter. You need not stop there even till 24th if your mind is not there. It is distinctly harmful for you to be there, if you can't be happy there, but will stay there because it is a duty imposed from without. You have tried that again and again and failed each time. Therefore you must follow your will, no matter where it leads you to. You will learn only by making mistakes, if mistakes there must be, through following your will. ... ...So far as I am concerned come in reply to this letter. I shan't feel unhappy. On the contrary I shall feel happy in the thought that you would exercise unrestricted freedom.*

Love,

Bapu

Segaon, Wardha,
9-8-'37

* The old struggle was again overcoming me, and I returned to Sevagram.

294

Calcutta,
22-3-'38

चि. मीरां,

I stupidly did not bring the ink-pot and Kanu is not quite as thoughtful and solicitous as you. So I can only give you a pencil letter.

The bath has been most useful.* That it might not have been with me but for your watchfulness was due to Kanu's thoughtlessness. He is still shaping.

I am really keeping extraordinarily well. I have hazarded an experiment for the love of a good man. That has disturbed the b. p. but I hope that it will come under control today. Sushila must describe the experiment if she will.

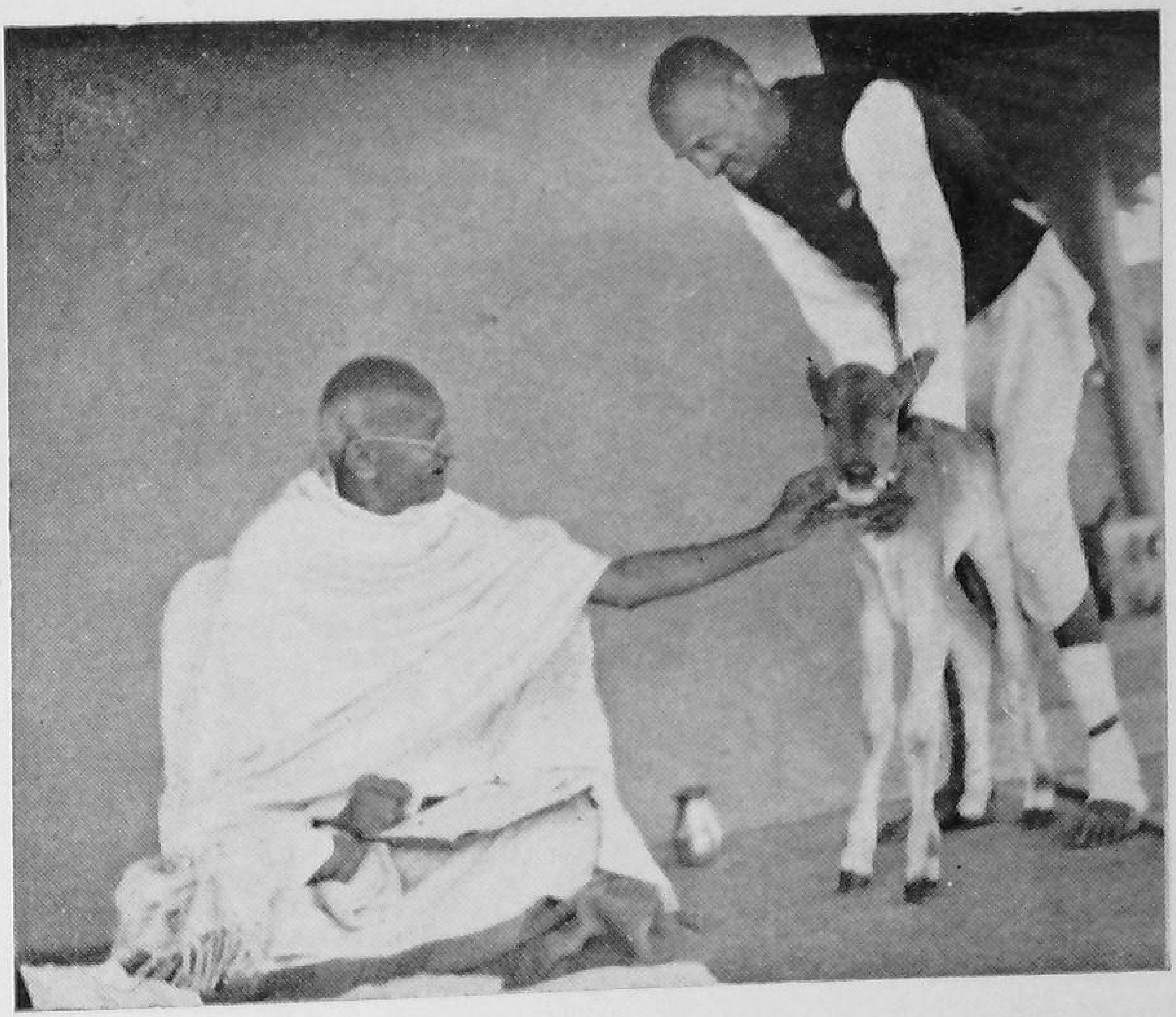
I am afraid the stay out of Segaon will be prolonged — perhaps by a week. I must come back to C. for the Working Committee. You must not feel disturbed. Resign yourself to God. When I can usefully take you with me, you shall come. And of course you accompany me if I go away anywhere for months. I hope you are keeping well. How about salad greens ?

Love,

Bapu

---

* A tin bath, which used to be taken on journeys when no big bath was likely to be available for Bapu. To lie in hot water was part of the blood pressure treatment.



Balwant Singh introduces to Bapu a new addition to the family.

Page 312

295

चि. मीरां,

I am distressed that my return is being unduly prolonged. The suspense must be terrible for you. But if you have found your bottom you won't be upset. In spite of what you may see from the papers or other sources, believe me I am quite well. Deep down in me there is the feeling that I shall stand the strain I have still to go through. The people spare me generously. The weather is not trying. I shall feel happy if I know that you are not worrying over the delay in returning or over my health. After all we are in God's hands for everything.

Love,

Bapu

Calcutta,
4-4-'38

296

चि. मीरां,

Today is the fasting day and I think of you all. I have decided provisionally that even though I may not finish my work, I shall leave here not later than 12th. May leave earlier. I shall hope to reach you not later than 16th. This is all unconscionably long but I have become perfectly helpless. A day out of Segaon is a day lost. But there it is and here I am. God will have His way....

. . . .

Love,

Bapu

6-4-'38

297

चि. मीरां,

Your brother-in-law's letter is very fine. Evidently your sister was a very superior woman — a rare type. I can understand your grief over such a loss. But such losses are a test of our faith. Nothing but a fixed faith that death for the good is a translation to a better state, and for the evil a beneficent escape can reconcile us to the mystery of death.

Love,

Peshawar,
8-5-'38

Bapu

298

चि. मीरां,

Here it is all dry, there all wet. This prolongation of wet weather is a ruinous thing. And yet we may not grumble. It is all God's doing. Only we don't know Him. To grumble is also a **विषय**. It won't abate till we know Him face to face.

. . . .

Love,

Delhi,
24-9-'38

Bapu

299

Telegram (From New Delhi dated 3-10-1938).

Mira, Maganwadi, Wardha

Leaving Tomorrow Post Utmanzai.

Bapu

300

चि. मीरां,

I have anticipated you all. For I have plunged into the European waters. You will give your reaction to the articles, for I have written another.

. . . .

We have just arrived in Utmanzai.

Love,

Bapu

Utmanzai,
9-10-'38

301

चि. मीरां,

Your draft letter to Dr. B.* is perfect. I can't alter a word. I have filled in the blank.

Ba is still ailing in Delhi though D.† says she is on the mend.

Mahadev is bound to benefit by his stay in Simla. Morose he will be for want of work and being cut off from me.

We may be on the move in a day or two.

---

* Dr. Benes — Czechoslovakia was then being devoured by Hitler.

† Devadas.

I hope Balwantsingh is happy among his cows. What about the ailing calf ?

Love,

Utmanzai, Bapu
13-10-'38

302

चि. मीरां,

I have all your letters. Although Dr. Benes is practically banished, your letter should go to him even if it has not. If he imbibes the spirit, exile need not matter.

Here we have superb weather. There you have abnormal rains. So had Bombay. I suppose the crops are destroyed.

... ...

Love,

Peshawar, Bapu
15-10-'38

303

चि. मीरां,

All being well, we reach there on 11th including Mahadev. These illnesses have made me impatient to reach you.

Your second letter to Dr. B. was quite good.

Love,

2-11-'38 Bapu

304

Postcard

चि. मीरां,

I hope you had mine of yesterday. This is just to tell you that now that you are gone everybody misses you.* Your room is more than full. Mahadev is not going anywhere for the time being at any rate.

B. P. 160/98.

Love,

Bapu

Segaon,
26-11-'38

305

चि. मीरां,

For the last three days I have neglected you so far as writing is concerned. You have been simply crowded out. So this I am writing before the morning prayer. But though I do not write, there is enough here to make me think of you often enough every day.

I wonder how you are getting on in body, mind and soul? I am anxiously waiting to hear from you.

Of the news here I must ask Sharada to write to you.

Love,

Bapu

5-12-'38

I have at last your letter from Peshawar. I am quite well. B. P. is in order. The cold has begun here.

---

* I had left for the North-West Frontier.

306

Segaon, Wardha,
27-12-'38

चि. मीरां,

Your daily post is an eagerly awaited event for me. My heart and spirit are with you. The spirit is hovering round you. You must not accept defeat. . . . You must keep your health and keep it there. There means the Frontier Province. I am prepared to risk your death there rather than that you should return to Segaon to live.* You will be all right in Peshawar. You may pass the week-end in Peshawar, if you cannot keep well in Utmanzai.

Anyway, see if my suggestion commends itself to you that you are going to do or die there. Of course I shall be there in March. It may not be before the middle because the Congress does not meet before 10th March. . . .

Love,

Bapu

307

Segaon, Wardha,
29-12-'38

चि. मीरां,

. . . Did I ask you to tell K. S.† that if he was invited to see the Governor he should not say "no"? You are also likely to be invited. I am glad you are having the pupils fairly regularly now. It is a great thing that is being done.‡

. . . .

Love,

Bapu

* I was striving with all my might to achieve what I knew Bapu would like of me. But those words about never returning to Segaon to live which, in fact, meant never returning to live near Bapu haunted me like a nightmare.

† Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan.

‡ I was teaching carding and spinning to Khudai Khidmatgars.

308

चि. मीरां,

Your letters are all works of art whether brief or long. . . . If you will be patient you will find that the Pathan grows on you. He is an admirable fellow — open if he once trusts you.

You need not worry about my health. I am taking all the care I can. I am taking the rest that is possible. B. P. is under control. Jumpy, I fear, it will remain unless I lead the forest life and cease all outward activity. But that would be wrong. I must discover the art of living long though full of activity to the end. I shall never completely master it, having dissipated so much of my life in youth. We have to be thankful for what God vouchsafes of the rest of my life.

Love,

Bapu

Bardoli,
20-1-'39

309

Segaon, Wardha,
2-2-'39

चि. मीरां,

I have neglected you for many days but S.* has instructions to write to you daily. I have to take complete rest from physical toil but also as much as possible from mental. You won't worry. Bury yourself in your work. . . .

. . . . . .

Love,

Bapu

* Sushila.

310

Segaon, Wardha,
3-2-'39

चि. मीरां,

Your letter from Peshawar is crowded with news. You are in the thick of it now. You must keep your health at any cost. Cover your feet well. Insist on the food you need. Do not overdo it. And do not go beyond your depth. Then all will be well.

Have no worry on my account. God will keep me on Earth so long as He needs me. It is well whether I am here or elsewhere. His will, not ours, be done.

Love,

Bapu

311

चि. मीरां,

All your letters are good and works of art. Your report of the interview is graphic. Let us hope it will bear fruit.

The money I hope you received in good time.

I shall try to come as soon as I can.

The rest from Sushila.

Love,

13-2-'39 (env.)

Bapu

312

Viramgam,
27-2-'39

चि. मीरां,

We reach Rajkot about 2-50 p.m. Train going, so goodbye.

Love,

Bapu

313

Telegram (From Rajkot dated 27-2-'39).

Mirabehn care Badshahkhan Charsadda.

Bore journey well. Talks begun.

Love,

Bapu

314

Telegram (From Rajkot dated 3-3-1939).

Mirabai care Badshahkhan Charsadda.

Fast begun with prayer and rejoicing.* It is likely be prolonged. You must not worry but continue work.

Love,

Bapu

315

Telegram (From Rajkot dated 4-3-1939).

Mirabai care Badshahkhan Charsadda Tahsil.

Keeping well. Have no anxiety. Inform Khansahib.

Bapu

---

* Owing to the ruler of Rajkot having broken solemn pledges to his people.

316

Telegram (From Rajkot dated 7-3-1939).

Mirabehn care Badshahkhan Charsadda.

Fast broken * thank God. Inform Doctor Saheb Badshahkhan.

Pyarelal

317

चि. मीरां,

I hope you have bravely borne the fast which has enriched me perhaps more than the previous ones. I am quite happy. Strength too is coming. No more just now.

Love,

Bapu

Rajkot,
8-3-'39

318

चि. मीरां,

I am daily getting stronger. Therefore there should be no anxiety. I reach Delhi on 15th and know not how long I shall have to stay there. There is just a possibility that I would have to come back to Rajkot. I must think of nothing else before Rajkot is set on its feet.

Love,

11-3-'39 Bapu

* The Viceroy had suggested, with the Ruler's assent, arbitration by Sir Maurice Gwyer, then Chief Justice of India, which Bapu had accepted.

319

On the train for Calcutta,
25-4-'39

चि. मीरां,

Well, I am going from the frying pan into the fire.* What a test for me? You will have seen my Rajkot statement. It gives you a glimpse into my mental state. To be in Bombay was like breathing fresh air — Bombay which I used to avoid.

I am on grape juice and Glucose. That alone keeps the fever and many complications down. I do not know how long I shall have to prolong the fruit diet.

Your long letter is deeply interesting. You are making your way. You will conquer difficulties if you keep your health.

. . . .

Love,

Bapu

320

चि. मीरां,

I hope you got my letter or letters (I forget). Khansaheb is here and will be till 7th. I leave on 8th for Rajkot via Banaras, breaking the journey for the night in Banaras to see Malaviyaji. How long I shall have to be in Rajkot, I do not know.

Khansaheb told me you were happy and were doing your work.

---

* Bapu was on his way to Calcutta for negotiations with the Fazlul Haq Ministry with regard to the political prisoners who had been put in jail under the Bengal Ordinance.

Here it is not all village work or village atmosphere. Plenty of motors and city amenities. These jar on one. You will be surprised to know that there are no mosquitoes to be found in this camp. This is due not to man's effort but nature's disposition.

Love,

Brindaban,
Champaran,
4-5-'39

Bapu

321

चि. मीरां,

Your letter arrived today after unexpected absence. But I was not worrying. There is enough here to occupy me. Heat is your enemy. Stenches and crowds add to the difficulty. From your telegram I infer that you are safely in Hazara. I hope it is cooler or rather less hot there. I expect to get away on 6th from Bombay for the Frontier Provinces. But God disposes.

Love,

Rajkot,
29-5-'39

Bapu

322

Telegram (From Rajkot dated 29-5-1939).

Mirabai care Mangalsain Bankers
Abbottabad.

Hoping leave Bombay sixth June.

Bapu

323

Telegram (From Bombay dated 6-6-1939).

Mirabehn, care Poštmaster Mansehra.

Again held up till end month.

Bapu

324

[The long delay in Bapu's coming to the Frontier had told severely on my health and at last I returned to Sevagram. Knowing that Bapu wanted me to work independently, I mustered up courage and went on to Bihar. In the meantime, Bapu's long postponed visit to the Frontier materialized, and the sorrow in my heart became further accentuated.]

Telegram (From Abbottabad dated 11-7-1939).

Mirabehn C/o Khadibhandar Madhubani.

You can remain if health continues good.

Bapu

325

चि. मीरां,

I have your booklet* full of news. Of course the Biharis are lovable. I would not remove you from them if you will keep your health. Don't deceive yourself that you are well, when you are not. Watch yourself and do whatever comes your way.

Don't be hasty in your judgments. You jump to conclusions without enough data.

We leave for Kashmir on 25th and stay there seven days at the outside.

Love,

Bapu

Abbottabad,
17-7-'39

* Long letter.

326

[I had returned from Bihar to Sevagram and later gone on to the Punjab.]

Segaon,
Wardha, (C. P.)

चि. मीरां,

I have been thinking of you all these days. I write this to tell you that you are not out of mind because you are out of sight. I miss you. I hope time is doing its healing work. I wonder if the Pandit * came. You must write to me regularly.

We leave here on 15th by the cheaper train, reaching Calcutta 17th morning. We go to S'niketan the same day and return on 19th to take the train for Malikanda.

Love,

9-2-'40

Bapu

327

Sevagram, Wardha,
12-3-'40

चि. मीरां,

I have your 2nd letter....You are not to defy any orders. There is no C. D. for anybody as yet. When it is declared those engaged in constructive activities will be unaffected. You are engaged in such. Why do you anticipate my orders ? Last time you were engaged in political activities. This time you are not. A Satyagrahi is always prepared for but does not anticipate repression. He imputes no evil to his opponent. Here is an interruption.

Love,

Bapu

---

* Pandit Jagat Ram.

[I was now at Palampur (Kangra). I had stayed at Oel Ashram for some three months, and had further experience of the art of building mud cottages. As a demonstration to the Ashramites who had been building a *pucca* brick house at considerable expense, I built myself with the aid of two or three villagers and a carpenter a small cottage for Rs. 18/-. I then wandered round the villages and purchased for Rs. 7/- a cow and calf whom I tied at the corners of my verandah. These were the last cheap days !]

Sevagram, Wardha,
18-5-'40

चि. मीरां,

I was wondering why I had not heard from you so long. Anything beyond a week will be too long for me. Though your descriptive letters are welcome (they are your speciality), a p. c. when you have no time would be enough.

Do I take it that you have left Oel for good ? I don't mind if you have. I want you to feel free and make yourself happy.

Your description of your new place is attractive, but I do not know that I shall ever reach there. There is no prospect of my going to Simla. Though Sevagram is a furnace just now, I feel like not moving out at all. The work before me takes up all my time.

. . . .

Love,

Bapu

329

Postcard

चि. मीरां,

I have your chatty letter. I envy you your scenery. But I have to be in the midst of the storm. I have taken indefinite silence since yesterday for the sake of peace and work. It will break for the W. C. or accidents.

Love,

Sevagram, Wardha,
25-5-'40

Bapu

330

Postcard

Sevagram, Wardha,
28-5-'40

चि. मीरां,

I do not think the stay at Oel was a waste. You are gaining valuable experience and keeping well in body and mind. I don't mind the expense. Do as the spirit moves you. It will be good if you can persuade Panditji to join you. Frightful things are happening in the West. God's will be done.

Love,

Bapu

331

[The inner struggle had come to a crisis and such bewildering and delusive mists and fogs had enveloped my path that, in my anguish, I went into silence and seclusion that I might the better pray to God for help. The silence, with a few days' breaks for travelling, lasted 15 months. For part of the time my rule was to speak once a day for half an hour, if necessary, and for the rest of the time when I was in a cottage in the Sevagram fields, I spoke twice a week in the evening when I went to see Bapu. I read only the *Vedas* and the *Puranas*, and I span 1,000 yards of yarn a day. When I came out of the silence, God had given me the strength which I had up to then sought in vain.]

Sevagram,
Wardha, C. P., 7-9-'40

चि. मीरां,

I have your long letter. It enables me to follow the struggle that is going on within you. You have not yet acquired the art of looking within for everything. Carding should soothe just as much as spinning once you connect the process with God. Farhad saw his God through breaking a mountain. He is represented as one incessantly delivering heavy blows with God-given strength. He broke the mountain and found his God who is represented as a fair bride. It will be an indulgence if you spin with slivers supplied from Sabarmati or elsewhere. But your arms may be too weak to card heavily. The body may be too weak to respond to the routine involved in all the processes, involved in attaining speed and quantity. But for you neither of these two things is essential. What is essential is the spirit of dedication to God. Whatever your outward activity it must be all for God....

God be with you.

Love,
Bapu

332

Sevagram,
Wardha, C. P., 21-9-'40

चि. मीरां,

I have kept you without a letter now for some days. But Bombay gave me neither time nor peace. I returned on Thursday but I am able to write to you only today (Saturday).

Kanaiyalal * has sent a sweet reply. He understands and appreciates the position. You will therefore have no difficulty.

I see your point about slivers.† I have now asked Lakshmidas to send you best slivers so as to enable you to spin fine counts. You will tell me when you receive them and warn me in good time when you are likely to run out of stock.

The descriptive parts of your letter are just as fresh and delightful as ever. From that I infer that you are enjoying inner peace. Your *sadhana* there will be vain if it does not give you ever-growing peace. Your affinity for bird, beast, tree and stone is your greatest support. They are never failing friends and companions.

Love,

Bapu

* Lala Kanaiyalal Butail, my host who had the hut prepared for me in his pine forest.

† I had explained to Bapu that as I was combining *japa* with spinning, the turn of the wheel taking the place of the bead. I was most anxious not to have to interrupt spinning for carding and sliver-making in which no *japa* could be easily combined.

I expect you do not want me to give you political news or even Ashram news.*

333

Postcard

Sevagram,
14-10-'40

चि. मीरां,

I am glad you are in your new abode.† There is a ring of sadness about the few lines you have sent me. I want you to feel inner joy and strength. God be with you.

Love,

Bapu

Your *khadi* has now come. If you gave me instructions about it, I have forgotten. Shall I keep it for you?

334

Postcard

Sevagram,
20-10-'40

चि. मीरां,

I have your big and good letter. Yes, I have started C. D. It is confined only to Vinoba at present. I do not court imprisonment. Vinoba still remains free. If you will like me to give you news I will. I won't tempt you nor disturb you.

It is all well with you.

Love,

Bapu

---

* I had stopped seeing all newspapers including *Harijan* and all letters except Bapu's.

† A solitary little hut in a pinewood on the mountain side.

V. was arrested at 3 a.m. today. The trial takes place today. Successor not yet appointed, there being no need to hurry.

P.*

335

Postcard

Sevagram,
11-11-'40

चि. मीरां,

Your good letter has just come in. Your *tapasya* is real and therefore the zest must come. And with the zest must come bodily strength. The slivers will be sent when you ask for them. You are right. I may be taken any moment. What does it matter ? The Ashram is full to overflowing.

Love,

Bapu

336

Postcard

Sevagram, Wardha,
2-12-'40

चि. मीरां,

Your nice long letter has just arrived. I understand all you write. May He be your sole guide. I am not unwell. I need rest which I am taking. Yes, I have been pestered with mice. I can't sleep if they disturb me. Their nibbling may be even poisonous. Have you a bedstead ? Your net should have a strong flat roof. You must have undisturbed

* Pyarelal.

nights.* I purposely refrain from giving you any other news or messages. I want to leave your meditation undisturbed.

Love,

Bapu

337

Postcard

Sevagram,
4-12-'40

चि. मीरां,

This is being written immediately after reading your letter. I am referring the water difficulty to 3 doctors who happen to be here. One of them is Sushila. Our contract is that you will stay in the mountains provided you keep your health. Sound body is a condition of every effort material, moral or spiritual.

. . . .

Love,

Bapu

Put alum 6 gr. to a gallon of water. Let the water stand overnight. In the morning take out the water. Add half a teaspoonful of lime to a gallon of this water and boil and use. But you should get distilled water in Palampur. If you can, use that only.

---

* I had explained to Bapu how several little mice had started coming into the hut from the forest, specially at night. They found their way into my bed, sometimes nibbling my feet, sometimes running up and down my side and sometimes getting mixed up in my hair. My chief anxiety was not to squash them. And what with this anxiety and the fidgetting of the mice, sleep became a difficult problem, until I hit on the device of using a mosquito net. This proved wholly successful.

338

Sevagram,
20-12-'40

चि. मीरां,

I have your letter. Yes, all the *Puranas* are worth reading. They are real history of all time. I am glad you are having more and more peace.

Love,

Bapu

339

Postcard

Sevagram, Wardha,
24-1-'41

चि. मीरां,

Your 2nd letter just to hand. If finally it is decided that you should come to Varoda, I shall bear your wish in mind. But my presentiment is that you won't be happy there for any length of time. If you keep your health you need not disturb yourself until you are quite clear in your mind that you can have your peace in the haunts of mankind.

Love,

Bapu

340

Telegram (From Wardha dated 30-1-'41.)

Mirabehn, Palampur

Come at once Varoda love, well.

Bapu

341

[I had returned from the mountains and was staying in my hut on the hill.]

चि. मीरां,

I had fully expected to see you yesterday and today. I would then have fixed up the day with you. You can have Wednesdays and Saturdays at 8-15 p.m. if that would suit you.* You can start from tonight.

Love,

12-2-'41

Bapu

342

[Owing to the extreme heat in the hut on the hill, Bapu was sending me to Chorwad, by the seaside, in Junagadh State. I had halted at Nasik on the way.]

Postcard

Sevagram,
6-4-'41

चि. मीरां,

I was afraid you will suffer in the train. Yes, you can go to Chorwad. Harakhchandbhai's letter has been received. He is quite glad you could go. I am not wiring because it is Sunday and a wire would reach you no earlier than this.

Love,

Bapu

* For going to see Bapu, at which time I use to break my silence.

343

Postcard

Sevagram, Wardha,
21-4-'41

चि. मीरां,

Your letter full of beautiful description.* I am glad you are in such peace and you have the benevolent company of Harakhchandbhai....

Love,

Bapu

344

Sevagram, Wardha,
13-5-'41

चि. मीरां,

Your plan of disbandment reads well but means little. The cowshed is separate but Balwantsingh is not. The dairy is separate but Parnerkar is not. The thing is that the world is inseparable from me. There are more Bhansalis than one. They all do not behave so handsomely as he does. But there they are. You have not gone deeper into the thing. It is not the kitchen that is worrying me. The growth has been spontaneous and the destruction or the reshaping will have to be likewise. I can only help the process. Everywhere I have been overwhelmed. The Rajkot home gave place to the Bombay Home. That to the Natal Home, the latter again to Bombay, then two in J. B.,†

* I was staying in a mud cottage in the midst of a magnificent fruit garden, twenty acres in extent. It was full of gorgeous peacocks some of whom would now and then come and dance in front of me while I was spinning.

† Johannesberg.

then Phoenix, Tolstoy Farm, back to Phoenix, then Kochrab, Sabarmati, Maganwadi and Sevagram. I have omitted the intermediate shifts. All came in their due course. Heaven only knows where I am to be flung again. No, my safety lies in praying and waiting. "Lead Thou me on."

... ...

Love,

Bapu

345

Sevagram, Wardha,
22-5-'41

चि. मीरां,

Your letter. An inquiry has come from London whether the report is true that you have severed all connection with me and are living away from me!!! How wish is father to thought!

As you say if something drastic has to happen, it will do so even on some pretext appearing altogether flimsy.*

... ...

Most of the reports you read in the papers are patent lies, manufactured for pushing up sales. I am not going to Ahmedabad, nor touring, nor going to Simla. And yet any of these things may come to pass though at present unexpected. But these newspaper men will be able to say, "you see we were right."

... ...

War news continues to be sensational. The news about the destruction in England is heart-rending. The Houses of Parliament, the Abbey, the Cathedral seemed to be immortal. And yet there is no end....

Love,

Bapu

---

* We were still corresponding on the subject of the Sevagram Ashram, and what could be done about it.

346

[I had returned from Chorwad and was living in a cottage by a well in a newly planted *bagicha* about half a mile from Sevagram.]

Monday,
23-6-'41

चि. मीरां,

I have read the enclosed. It is a good collection.* All these verses have more meanings assigned to them than what you have found. But for us the literal meaning is enough.

Love,

Bapu

347

Sevagram,
1-7-'41

चि. मीरां,

Ramdas says at present he has not a man to spare. Can Undhru do the job under your directions ? Can you procure labour from Varoda ? Your difficulty is real. But I am helpless. Experiences like this show that labour is more than money. . . .Will you like me to procure labour from Wardha ?

Love,

Bapu

* Verses from the *Rigveda.*

348

12-7-'41

चि. मीरां,

The enclosed is the last.* It is very interesting. The Gods and men share the same virtues and vices, and are familiar friends who often quarrel among themselves. The one invisible Power stands supreme and unbound.

You are cutting your way through difficulties. You can easily make *chapatis* of *juari* flour. Try and you will succeed.

Love,

Bapu

349

चि. मीरां,

I finished these last night in the "library". It will be a good selection in the end.

Love,

Bapu

31-7-'41

350

Sevagram, Wardha,
20-11-'41

चि. मीरां,

In the midst of work, I won't say anything beyond saying: May God the Truth, not Untruth, guide you. For God is both Truth and Untruth. If you do not understand this language you should ask me to give you its meaning.

Love,

Bapu

* Selections from Vedic hymns which I had been sending to Bapu regularly.

351

Bardoli,
13-12-'41

चि. मीरां,

This is just to tell you that you are never out of my mind. I was immersed in writing work which is just finished. I hope you are getting stronger and having greater inner peace.

Love,

Bapu

I am in excellent form.

352

[I had now come out of my silence and was staying in Ashadevi's home, in order to revise and complete, with her assistance, my English rendering of selected Vedic hymns. In the cottage, where I had stayed during the last months of silence, I had caught and removed to the fields not less than 52 scorpions. One or two snakes also inhabited the place. In Aśhadevi's house, I set about catching the rats and within about a week removed over thirty to a distant upland.]

Swaraj Ashram, Bardoli,
3-1-'42

चि. मीरां,

You catch scorpions, rats, snakes. Presently you will have a museum ! ! ! I am glad you are nearing the end of your selections.

Love to you all,

Bapu

353

Sevagram,
25-1-'42

चि. मीरां,

Your letter. Your pathetic note was received in Kashi. I could not understand why you should have felt so grieved at our not meeting, as I went.* You had met me in the morning, had you not? But even if you had not, you should be now above these outward demonstrations of affection which is a permanent thing independent of outward manifestation. Let your work be your sole absorption.

I am glad you are keeping fit.

...I am all right.

Love,

Bapu

354

Sevagram,
15-3-'42

चि. मीरां,

I have your letter. I am glad you have seen the untruth. Danger is not yet over. But God is your sure Guide and Friend. Trust Him through and through. Your body is a good index for you.

The Ashram is overcrowded but it goes on.

Love,

Bapu

* Never in all these years had I not touched Bapu's feet before he left for a journey; but on this occasion he had departed before I realized what was happening.

355

[I had gone to a village near Navsari to help Kamaladevi and Mridulabehn in the preparing and running of a women's camp.]

Segaon,
11-4-'42

चि. मीरां,

I wrote to you yesterday. You will, I know, do the best you can for the camp. As to other work I have nothing in view just now and may not have any at any time. But no one knows what will happen the next moment.

Love,

Bapu

356

[Just at this time Bapu was writing his leader for *Harijan* entitled "Foreign Soldiers". It must have been at practically the same hour when I wrote Bapu a long letter expressing almost exactly the same sentiments, to which I had added that, if Bapu would agree, I should like to go to the A. I. C. C. meeting shortly to be held at Allahabad and plead behind the scenes with the leaders for organizing nationwide non-violent resistance to the Japanese. To this letter Bapu replied in a wire, "If you feel like that, come at once." At the same time he wrote the following letter:]

Segaon,
20-4-'42

चि. मीरां,

I have your letter. I must let you come here and see what can be done. You are undertaking a job which leaves you no other consideration. I have sent you a wire. I do not know whether it will reach you. Everything has become so uncertain nowadays.

Love,

Bapu

[I took the next train to Sevagram. As soon as I came to Bapu, he said, handing me two sheets of typed paper: "Read this. If it appeals to you, you take it to Allahabad by the next train. In the meantime I will give you an hour's talk so as fully to explain to you my state of mind which you must make clear to the members of the Working Committee." This paper, which Bapu handed to me, was his original draft of the "Quit India" resolution. I left for Allahabad by the next train, carrying two letters from Bapu, one for Pandit Jawaharlal, and one for Maulana Saheb, with copies of the resolution.

After the passing of Bapu's original draft resolution in modified form at Allahabad, I returned straight to Sevagram with Rajendrababu, Dr. Prafulla Ghosh and Shankarrao Deo. We placed before Bapu the resolution and asked him for marching orders, which he gave in clear and decisive tones, sending each person to his province. To me he said, "I give you the choice of three undertakings: (1) To go to Madras and plead with Rajaji, (2) To go to Delhi and reason with the Viceroy and other high British officers, (3) To go to Orissa and help to prepare the masses for non-violent non-co-operative resistance to the probable Japanese invasion of the east coast. Without a moment's hesitation, I chose the third, and was, therefore, now in Orissa.]

Postcard

Sevagram,
18-5-'42

चि. मीरां,

Your first letter was received in Bombay. You will keep me posted. Things moving well.

Love,

Bapu

358

Sevagram,
23-5-'42

चि. मीरां,

You must have received my p. c.s or letters, I forget which. If you get *Harijan*, it is more than my weekly letter.

I have fully discussed your questions with Gopababu. Nevertheless I am answering all your important questions in *Harijan*. Herewith is an advance copy. The answers should not be published before they appear in *Harijan*.

I have shared your letter with Asha, Mahadev and Kishorlal. Your power of description is of a high order. It makes your letters delightful reading.

From my answers you will see that I want to hasten slowly. I do not want to precipitate matters. Our steps must be firm but gradual so that people may understand them so far as it is possible. A time must come when the thing may become beyond control. We may not purposely let it go out of control. Is this clear ?

Love,

Bapu

[The following report, which I sent to Bapu, I am reproducing in full, as it explains exactly the situation which was facing us in Orissa at that time, and makes clear the full meaning of Bapu's replies to my questions which he gives in the next letter :]

Question of Invasion and Occupation by the Japanese

We may take it that the Japanese will land somewhere along the Orissa coast. Probably there will be no bombing or firing at the time of landing, as there are no defence measures on the coast. From the coast they will advance rapidly across the flat dry rice fields, where the only

obstructions are rivers and ditches, now mostly dry and nowhere unfordable. As far as we are able to make out there will be no serious attempt to hold the Japanese advance until the hilly and wooded regions of the Orissa States are reached. The army of defence, whatever it is, is reported to be hidden in the jungle of these parts. It is likely to make a desperate attempt to defend the Jamshedpur road, but the chances of its being successful must be very small. That means we may expect a battle to be fought in the north-west of Orissa, after which the Japanese army will pass on into Bihar. At that time the Japanese are not likely to be broadly distributed over the country, but concentrated on their lines of communication between the sea and their advancing army. The British administration will have previously disappeared from the scene.

The problem before us is, in the event of these things happening, how are we to act ?

The Japanese armies will rush over the fields and through the villages, not as avowed enemies of the population, but as chasers and destroyers of the British and American war effort. The population in its turn, is vague in its feelings. The strongest feeling is fear and distrust of the British, which is growing day by day on account of the treatment they are receiving. Anything that is not British is therefore something welcome. Here is a funny example. The villagers in some parts say — " Oh, the aeroplanes that make a great noise are British, but there are silent planes also, and they are Mahatma's planes." I think the only thing possible for these simple, innocent people to learn is the attitude of neutrality, for it is, in reality, the only position that can be made logical to them. The British not only leave them to their fate without even instructing them in self-protection from bombing, etc., but they issue such orders as will, if obeyed, kill them before the day of battle comes. How then can they be ready enthusiastically to

obstruct the Japanese who are chasing this detested Raj, especially when the Japanese are saying, " It is not you we have come to fight." But I have found the villagers ready to take up the position of neutrality. That is to say, they would leave the Japanese to pass over their fields and villages, and try as far as possible not to come in contact with them. They would hide their foodstuffs and money, and decline to serve the Japanese. But even that much resistance would be difficult to obtain in some parts, the dislike of the British Raj being so great, that anything anti-British will be welcomed with open arms. I feel we have got to try and gauge the maximum resistance which the average inhabitants may be expected to put up and maintain, and make that our definite stand. A steady, long sustained stand, though not cent per cent resistance, will be more effective in the long run than a stiff stand, which quickly breaks.

This maximum sustainable stand which we may expect from the average people is probably :

1. To resist firmly, and mostly non-violently, the commandeering by the Japanese of any land, houses, or movable property.

2. To render no forced labour to the Japanese.

3. Not to take up any sort of administrative service under the Japanese.

(This may be hard to control in connection with some types of city people, Government opportunists and Indians brought in from other parts.)

4. To buy nothing from the Japanese.

5. To refuse their currency and any effort on their part at setting up a Raj.

(Lack of workers and lack of time make it very hard, but we have to strive to stem the tide.)

Now as to certain difficulties and questions which arise :

1. The Japanese may offer to pay for labour, food and materials in British currency notes. Should the people refuse to sell for good prices or work for a good wage ? For long sustained resistance over many months it may be difficult to prevent this. So long as they refuse to buy or take " service ", the exploitation danger is kept off.

2. What should be done about the rebuilding of bridges, canals, etc. which the British will have blown up ? We shall also need the bridges and canals. Should we, therefore, set our hands to their rebuilding, even if it means working side by side with the Japanese, or should we retire on the approach of Japanese bridge builders ?

3 If Indian soldiers, who were taken prisoners in Singapore and Burma, land with the Japanese invading army, what should be our attitude towards them ? Should we treat them with the same aloofness as we are to show the Japanese or should we not try to win them over to our way of thinking ?

4. After the exodus (before the approaching Japanese) of the British Raj, what shall we do about currency ?

5. After battles have been fought and the Japanese armies will have advanced, the battlefield will be left strewn with dead and wounded. I think we must unhesitatingly work side by side with the Japanese in burning and burying the dead and picking up and serving the wounded ? The Japanese are likely to attend to the lightly wounded of their own men and take prisoner the lightly wounded of their enemy, but the rest would probably be left, and it will be our sacred duty to attend to them. For this we are from now planning the training of volunteers under the guidance of local doctors. Their services can also be used in case of internal disturbances, epidemics, etc.

6. Besides dead and wounded on the battlefield, a certain amount of rifles, revolvers and other small arms are likely to be left lying about unpicked up by the Japanese. If we do not make a point of collecting these things they are likely to fall into the hands of robbers, thieves and other bad characters, who always come down like hawks to loot a battlefield. In an unarmed country like India this would lead to much trouble. In the event of our collecting such arms and ammunition what should we do with them? My instinct is to take them out to sea and drop them in the ocean. Please tell us what you advise.

Mira

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[I had had an interview with two top English officials of the then Advisory regime. Since we were in possession of the fact that the Government officials were to retire to the hills, forty or fifty miles inland, the moment there was news of the Japanese coming and such files as they could not take in their motor cars were to be burnt and all bridges were to be blown up, my object at the interview was to request them to retire in an orderly fashion, leaving the administrative machinery in our hands. I specially pleaded with them to hand us over the keys of the jails and also not to take away the doctors and medical supplies of the civil hospitals.]

Sevagram,
Via Wardha, C. P.
31-5-'42

चि. मीरां,

I have your very complete and illuminating letter. The report of the interview is perfect, your answers were straight, unequivocal and courageous. I have no criticism to make. I can only say, 'Go on as you are doing.' I can quite clearly see that you have gone to the right place at

the right time. I therefore need do nothing more than come straight to your questions which are all good and relevant.

1. I think we must tell the people what they should do. They will act according to their capacity. If we begin to judge their capacity and give directions accordingly our directions will be halting and even compromising which we should never do. You will therefore read my instructions in that light. Remember that our attitude is that of complete non-co-operation with Japanese army, therefore we may not help them in any way, nor may we profit by any dealings with them. Therefore we cannot sell anything to them. If people are not able to face the Japanese army, they will do as armed soldiers do, i.e., retire when they are overwhelmed. And if they do so the question of having any dealings with Japanese does not and should not arise. If, however, the people have not the courage to resist Japanese unto death and not the courage and capacity to evacuate the portion invaded by the Japanese, they will do the best they can in the light of instructions. One thing they should never do — to yield willing submission to the Japanese. That will be a cowardly act, and unworthy of freedom-loving people. They must not escape from one fire only to fall into another and probably more terrible. Their attitude therefore must always be of resistance to the Japanese. No question, therefore, arises of accepting British currency notes or Japanese coins. They will handle nothing from Japanese hands. So far as dealings with our own people are concerned they will either resort to barter or make use of such British currency that they have, in the hope that the National Government that may take the place of British Government will take up from the people all the British currency in accordance with its capacity.

(2) Question about co-operation in bridge-building is covered by the above. There can be no question of this co-operation.

(3) If Indian soldiers come in contact with our people, we must fraternize with them if they are well disposed, and invite them, if they can, to join the nation. Probably they have been brought under promise that they will deliver the country from foreign yoke. There will be no foreign yoke and they will be expected to befriend people and obey National Government that might have been set up in place of British Government. If the British have retired in an orderly manner leaving things in Indian hands, the whole thing can work splendidly and it might even be made difficult for Japanese to settle down in India or any part of it in peace, because they will have to deal with a population which will be sullen and resistant. It is difficult to say what can happen. It is enough if people are trained to cultivate the power of resistance, no matter which power is operating — the Japanese or the British.

(4) Covered by (1) above.

(5) The occasion may not come, but if it does, co-operation will be permissible and even necessary.

(6) Your answer about the arms found on the wayside is most tempting and perfectly logical. It may be followed but I would not rule out the idea of worthy people finding them and storing them in a safe place if they can. If it is impossible to store them and keep them from mischievous people yours is an ideal plan.

Love,

Bapu

[From Orissa when danger of immediate invasion by the Japanese had lessened owing to the setting in of the rains, I went with Harikrishna Mehtab to Sevagram at the time of the Working Committee. After the "Quit India" resolution had been passed by the Committee, Bapu sent me straight to explain to the Viceroy the workings of his inmost thoughts. Lord Linlithgow, through his private secretary (Laithwaite), expressed his inability to see me; but as he wished to know what was in Bapu's mind, it was suggested that I should see Laithwaite, which I did and talked with him for a full hour.]

Sevagram,
21-7-'42

चि. मीरां,

You are living up to the certificate I have given you — you a born letter-writer of descriptive character. Your picture of your talk with Laithwaite is true to life.

I can understand and even appreciate the Viceroy's hesitation about seeing you. But your talk with L. will serve the purpose.

Sushila has told me about your meeting Maulana Saheb * and J. L.† It was good both were in Delhi. Give my love to Maulana Saheb if he is still there and tell him I hope he is completely restored.

I hope you had a good time in Hariana. You will return here or meet me in Bombay as time demands. I expect to leave here on 2nd, reaching Bombay on 3rd. I am keeping well. Pyarelal who was ill is definitely on the mend.

Love,

Bapu

* Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.
† Jawaharlal Nehru.

[Two unforgettable years passed between the last letter and this. From Delhi I joined Bapu in Bombay in August 1942. On August 9th, Bapu, Mahadev and myself were arrested in Birla House at 5 a.m. We three, the whole of the Working Committee and all the leading Congressmen and workers of Bombay were taken off in a special train. All but the members of the Working Committee, who, except for Mrs. Naidu, were taken on to Ahmednagar Fort, were detrained at a small station outside Poona. Bapu, Mrs. Naidu, Mahadev and myself were taken away in a car to the Aga Khan's Palace. The rest were taken to Yeravda jail. On the third day, Ba and Sushila joined us in the Aga Khan's Palace. The Palace had been surrounded with a huge barbed wire fence which, in turn, was guarded day and night by large numbers of armed police. Fateful and terrible events followed one another from the first days to last of our incarceration. Within five days of our arrival Mahadev died of heart failure. (Pyarelal was now sent by Government to join us.) Six months later, Bapu undertook his twenty-one days fast which brought him to the brink of death. Not long after the fast, Mrs. Naidu became dangerously ill with malaria, and was released in a precarious condition. Ba's health now began to fail and after a long, and most painful illness, she died in February, 1944. Shortly, after this, Bapu himself had a very severe attack of malaria which completely broke down his health. Finally the Government released Bapu and the rest of us in June of that year.]

Postcard

Sevagram,
Wardha,
3-8-'44

चि. मीरां,

All your letters were received. Came here today with a large party. I am very well. Yes, you should go slow, make no haste in choosing the soil.* The Ashram † has grown out of all proportion.

Love,

Bapu

* This was in connection with the site of a small Ashram which I was planning to start on my own, in the north-west of the United Provinces.

† Sevagram.

Bombay,
18-9-'44

चि. मीरां,

I have your letter from Rewari. Devadas has given me your messages. He adds that your body has become dilapidated. I fear I have to take the blame for it in part, if not wholly. How I wish I could also take the credit of repairing it. Why not take a course at Dinsha's or under Shiv Sharma ? Both are here at present. . . .

Tell me how the cows were saved from the butcher's hand. I would plead with you to put your body in order before you take up the serious responsibility of building and running an Ashram.

My talks * are dragging on. God alone knows the end of them. There is one good thing. I am bearing the strain well. I am keeping fit. . . . It is good too that we are within a stone's throw of each other.

Today is the silence day which I am devoting to clearing arrears.

Love,

Bapu

* Talks with Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah.

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Sevagram,
3-12-'44

चि. मीरां,

So you have the land of your choice. May all your dream be fulfilled. If I go to Delhi and get the time, of course, I should love to drive to your place. Do not be anxious about me. All I need is rest from the routine work, even love letters. So till the end of the year this is my last letter. This is the final day of writing letters.

Love,

Bapu

364

Sevagram,
18-1-'45

चि. मीरां,

Your letter just received. I hope you had my fairly full letter before this.

B. Singh * is not here. He is with Satishbabu. I have no hope of his coming to you. I should encourage him if he at all felt inclined. I know he will be the man for you. Any way you should come and see if you can pick up any one permanently or even for a time. There are many people here. Therefore you should come whenever you can.

There seems only a small chance of my coming to Delhi towards the end of February. If you come, the sooner the better. For the weather is daily becoming hotter.

Love,

Bapu

* Balwant Singh.

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Postcard

Sevagram,
27-2-'45

चि. मीरां,

You can have Kisan Ashram.* But if that, why not Mazdur or its equivalent ? A *kisan* can be a millionaire, not so a working man, a labourer. But I do not mind Kisan, if you prefer it.

Love,

Bapu

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Postcard

Sevagram,
25-3-'45

चि. मीरां,

Better a p. c. than no letter. I am glad you are making progress in the face of difficulties.... Hope for my coming to you in October.... Nothing certain about my movement except that I go to B.† on 31st inst. Am keeping well in spite of the heat which has begun in right earnest.

Love,

बापुके आशीर्वाद

* I had suggested Kisan Ashram as the name for the little Ashram.

† Bombay.

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Postcard

Bombay,
7-4-'45

चि. मीरां,

Your long and welcome letter. I am making a desperate effort to send you some one either Ramprasad or Munnalal.* Don't be quite certain about me. I have expressed my wish. But " there's many a slip between the cup and the lip ", who knows but He ? Your love of animals, among them of the cow, is boundless. I agree mostly that there should be personal attention,† if we are to get the real response. I am here till 20th, then to Mahabaleshwar.

Love,

Bapu

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Postcard

Simla,
27-6-'45

चि. मीरां,

Your letter. Beware of over-working yourself or acting against the weather for which you are not made. Do come to Simla ‡ whether I am here or not. I may leave any day. I am glad you have two helpers. . . .

Love,

Bapu

* I was having great difficulty in finding workers of the right type.

† Of the cow.

‡ I did go and was with Bapu for some days. It was at the time of the Simla Conference.

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Postcard

Sevagram,
25-7-'45

चि. मीरां,

If I am to write I must be brief. If you do not feel well you must run up to a cool place. I took the journey well. B. Singh must be with you, when this reaches you. . . . It is fair here. It rains off and on. But the insects are more numerous than before. . . .

Love,

Bapu

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Postcard

Poona,
9-10-'45

चि. मीरां,

Your letter. I am not going to omit you when I come to that side which, as at present arranged, I do not do before January. But nothing is fixed unless I move from Sevagram. I hope you are keeping well. . . .

Love,

Bapu

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Poona,
29-10-'45

चि. मीरां,

I have your letter just now and I reply before going for massage.

I am not leaving Sevagram, must not having founded a home for so many institutions.* I must now contradict and correct the report. I could not desert Sardar. I must come to you after doing the Frontier or going there. Everything is postponed by a month.

Let us trust to God guiding us. He may so compass that ultimately I may have to live with you. Wish nothing except to do His will. . . .

Love,

Bapu

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Saranima,
Assam,
10-1-'46

चि. मीरां,

This is just to tell you that I succeeded only yesterday in studying your drawings of the Himalaya scenes.† They need greater study than I was able to give them. But I had little difficulty in understanding and appreciating the love you have put into your work. Your instructions at the back are most careful.

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* A rumour had been started that Bapu was leaving Sevagram.
† From mountains about Rishikesh, now part of Pashulok.

I hope you had my previous letter in answer to your long letter. I do so wish you had less trouble with men and animals. Others must write to you about the wonderful experiences I am having here.

Love,

Bapu

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Telegram (From Poona dated 23-2-'46.)

Miraben care Postmaster Bahadrabad Jwalapur.

No chance Delhi. You may come to Poona any date after March twentieth.

Bapu

374

Telegram (From Poona dated 22-3-'46.)

Miraben Kisan Ashram Bahadrabad Jwalapur.

No chance. Come Delhi when I go there.

Bapu

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Simla,
13-5-'46

चि. मीरां,

Your letters show that you are working away. May God crown your efforts with success.

. . . You will see also an interesting note about mango seed. It seems to be valuable. You may try the thing at once. I have eaten the seed after roasting it. But I never knew that it had the food value attributed to it.

We may leave for Delhi tomorrow.

Love,

Bapu

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[In April I had become Honorary Adviser to the United Provinces Government in connection with the "Grow More Food" campaign. This had entailed a lot of touring in the hot weather, and I was now in Mussoorie for recouping my health.]

Sevagram,
19-8-'46

चि. मीरां,

This is merely to ask you how you would arrange the latrines for the Ashram and the village. Subsoil water being so near the surface, medical men who gathered here yesterday voted for septic tanks. I know you are averse to the idea. Send me your own opinion and a description of the preparation of compost. I forget if you include night-soil also as they do in Indore. Any way give me an accurate description for me to print or show to medical friends.

Don't recommence work unless you are quite fit. You have ample to do in Mussoorie.

It is raining as I write.

Love,

Bapu

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Shrirampur,
Via Ramganj, East Bengal,
1-12-'46

चि. मीरां,

I have your letter of 3rd November received only to-day. You must have had mine written to you from Bengal. My cold and cough have disappeared. I am not driving too hard the "Brother Ass". Therefore, do not worry on that

score. As you see, I did not, because I could not attend the Congress or the Working Committee. I am not likely to leave this place for some time to come, if ever.

I see you are making steady headway. I hope it will be all solid progress. Your article on Mussoorie *Bhangis* will go in *Harijan* as it is.

As you may have read, all the company that I brought with me from Delhi is dispersed in different villages in Noakhali. Bapa * has made common cause with me. So he is also in a village. Abha is with him. I have Prof. Nirmal Kumar Bose and Parashuram with me. You have to walk from place to place. No conveyance possible except country boats and these will cease to ply inside of ten days as there will not be enough water in the canals. I am not fit enough to walk three or four miles even. I like this isolation but you can imagine what it must be for poor people who live in dread.

I am glad that the Spirit moved me to this place. Let us see what is in store.

बापुके आशीर्वाद

378

Shrirampur,
Noakhali District,
4th December 1946

चि. मीरां,

Your letter dated 18th November reached me only yesterday. You know I am in a more inaccessible place than you are in. The distance is not too great but there is no cart road even. When the overflow canal water dries up, as it

* Thakkarbapa.

will in about ten days, all but walking to and fro will be out of place. The post is taken by runners as it was in Kathiawad only a few years ago and is in some places even now.

Don't worry about me. Put your faith and trust in God. I am in His safe keeping. He will make or mar me. For Him it will be all making, never marring.

Newspapers do not come here regularly. When they do come, they come behind time and what does come is local newspapers. Therefore, one does not know what appears in the Press. My prescription is " Don't believe what appears in the Press ", and remember that no news is good news. Do you know that A. G. Balfour, when he was Prime Minister, used to boast that he never read newspapers and lost nothing. Then I suppose you know that all my companions are distributed in different villages. Pyarelal sees me often, but he is not with me. He is in a village by himself assisted by a Bengali interpreter. I have Parashuram with me and therefore am able to dictate. The original idea was that I should take and want no assistance except a Bengali interpreter. Parashuram always helped Pyarelal but here he could not be placed by himself in a village. He was naturally anxious to be with me directly but he could not when I had all other assistance and was doing another class of work. Now that he is here, in addition to looking after me personally, he does my shorthand work, which enables me to go through what I had not expected or bargained for. And the Bengali assistant is a Professor who has for years made a deep study of my writings. Therefore, I have got most desirable assistance, but that assistance cannot cope with newspapers. Hence my outside work has been reduced to a minimum.

The work here is new, very pleasant, equally taxing. My *ahimsa* is on its trial. More of this another time. This is

only to relieve you of all anxiety on my behalf. I am now taking or trying to take the usual diet but it may take sometime after the twenty-one days' denial * to get used to it. I am progressing towards normal strength as quickly as I can. I dare not be in a hurry.

Now I see you resumed the thread you left on the 18th November, on 22nd. Your problems are extraordinary but they are all of your own making. Therefore, you can, as you must, reduce them to a manageable degree. You will not find the man or the men by searching. He or they will come to you if God wants you to do the type of work for which you want the man. I will therefore say, wait on Him and do what you can without vexing the soul....The Ashram is purely your own original idea. If the present site is not suitable for you, you should make what use you can of it. Personally, I would say, give up the idea of Ashram life except for your own person. Then you won't feel cramped and you can expand as high and as broad as the universe. You know that as Ashram I disbanded Sabarmati and it became a Harijan institution. The original was Satyagraha Ashram. That is gone for ever. Do not therefore ever think of handing over to anybody else the Ashram of your conception. Have in the present place married men or bachelors or whoever serves efficiently the activities you may take up. Otherwise, you will break down in health in spite of the most ideal weather you can have. Remember that in all I have said in the foregoing I have made the fullest allowance for your conception of the Ashram and because I have done so, I have advised you to restrict the Ashram ideal to yourself, taking as your co-workers as many capable persons as you can get so long as their pre-

* **Bapu had recently been through a semi-fast of 21 days, during which he took nothing (but fruit juices,) the reason being the Hindu-Muslim riots in Bihar.**

sence or manners do not jar on you or interfere with your own growth.*

I hope I have carried to you the whole of my meaning. If so, I have done.

This I have dictated before going out for my walk, i.e., as soon after 7-30 in the morning as possible. I have been working since 4 o'clock standard time, 5 o'clock local time. This includes the usual prayer time. The prayer is conducted by Parashuram.

बापुके आशीर्वाद

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As from Kazirkhil, Ramganj Post,
Noakhali District.

Camp : Chandipur,
4-1-1947

चि. मीरां,

Your registered letter is in front of me. The news will be given to you by Parashuram together with this letter. I simply dictate to say that the position you adumbrate is the correct thing. Everything depends upon one's purity in thought, word and deed, using the word "purity" in its widest sense. Then there may be no cause for even so much as a headache. Only get hold of this fundamental fact. We often loosely use the word "purity" and excuse all sorts

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* This letter led me definitely to the decision to give up the idea of trying to keep Kisan Ashram as a Brahmachari Ashram and to put married men with their families there. Bapu's advice that I should restrict the Ashram of my conception to myself, I whole-heartedly accepted, and as I was at that time planning a Government scheme for cattle development in the reserve forests near Rishikesh, I decided to settle in a little cottage on Gangaji's bank in the middle of the grazing lands and make that my Ashram.

of lapses. Do not even worry how I am faring or what I am doing here. If I succeed in emptying myself utterly, God will possess me. Then I know that everything will come true, but it is a serious question when I shall have reduced myself to zero. Think of "I" and "O" in juxtaposition and you have the whole problem of life in two signs. In this process you have helped me considerably for, though at a distance, you seem to be doing your duty to the fullest extent possible in your field of work.

This was dictated four days ago when I was resting in bed. But it remained untyped. Meantime your another letter and samples of *khadi* have been received. Have you any *khadi* to spare for sale? I make this inquiry for the sake of the refugees. Do not overdo things. Do not overwork. Be careful for nothing. The pilgrimage on foot commences tomorrow. There may be then no letter to you. A bulletin will be sent to you. This I am scribbling in the early morning. "Blessed are they that expect nothing."

Love,

Bapu

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Bhangi Colony,
New Delhi, the 25th May, '47

चि. मीरां,

I have your precious letter just received i.e. 5 o'clock. I am dictating this whilst spinning. The whole day has been spent in seeing people with a little break for rest. You need not wait to see the Vicerene. But you should proceed to Uttarkashi or Mussoorie as the case may be. Your solitude, the bracing air that you get in Mussoorie and

Uttarkashi and consequent clear thinking are more precious to me than your seeing high personages or even coming to see me because I appear to be so near. This is only an appearance. I am near enough wherever you are and wherever I am physically. The rest of your letter it is unnecessary for me to touch. I approve all your programme. I am quite well, though in broiling heat. I must not think of Mussoorie or any other similar climate. My work today lies in the affected parts. If God wishes me to do His work, He will keep me well in spite of adverse climate.

Love,

Bapu

Shrimati Mira Behn,
P. O. Rishikesh,
Dist. Dehra Dun.

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Calcutta,
29-5-'47
2-50 a.m.

चि. मीरां,

I had your two letters yesterday. I am glad you are better.

Your 55 years is as nothing for a disciplined life. But you are careful for nothing. But of this when we meet and can talk "outside business".

My movement has become uncertain.

You will know from the papers where I am the next day. "Look at the sparrows", they do not know what they will do the next moment. Let us literally live from moment to moment.

Love,

Bapu

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New Delhi,
15-6-'47

चि. मीरां,

I have your another long though interesting letter.

I am sorry about your illness. You must get rid of it even if you have to be in Uttarkashi for a long time.

I am myself thinking of going to Uttarkashi but it is all in the realm of dreamland. Therefore take no thought of it. You may however send me every detail about it.

I must not think of Dharampal * just now. Those who are with me are too many. I want to be alone but I know I cannot be.

My movement is quite uncertain.

Love,

Bapu

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Dictated

New Delhi,
29/30-6-'47

चि. मीरां,

I have your two wires and two letters giving me a vivid description of your experiences in Uttarkashi. The second letter is disturbing. After I commenced dictating I felt like dozing and I dozed. After the dozing was finished I got your third letter telling me about your movement to Dhanaulti. I hope that you were able, without any harm to the body, to negotiate the journey in your dilapidated

* Who might have joined Bapu's staff.

conditions.* It grieves me to think that even Uttarkashi with all its sacred associations could do no good to your body and that you found the water there to be too heavy and the atmosphere stifling. I hope the new place will treat you better. My going to Uttarkashi you have knocked on the head, and on the principle of "once bit twice shy", I shall look upon every Himalayan place with suspicion. However, I am in God's good hands. I shall wish neither one way nor the other. Sufficient unto the day is the good thereof. I must not think of the evil. No one knows what is really good or really evil. Therefore, let us think of nothing but good. Coming to mundane matters, when I am free from here I must go to Bihar and Noakhali and I might have to go to Kashmir almost immediately. Date will be decided, I hope, inside of a week. To Hardwar I went only for a few hours to see the refugees. The weather was too hot to permit of much movement.

... ...

बापुके आशीर्वाद

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[I had written to Bapu, saying that I had decided to go to Delhi to get my heart examined, as the strain of the Himalayan trip had left my health very unsatisfactory.]

Calcutta,
20-8-'47

चि. मीरां,

Your two letters and wire. I hope you got mine at Pratapnagar. All your letters were received.

*** The long journey on foot and horseback in the damp heat of the narrow valley had proved a severe strain on my health. In order to reach a cooler climate, I was fortunate in being able to go to Pratapnagar (instead of Dhanaulti) where I settled down to the work which I had brought with me, viz., the reading through and selecting of all Bapu's letters to me.**

During my last days with Bapu in Delhi

(Bapu is here seen coming out of Birla House on his way to visit a refugee camp.)

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So you have not gained by your stay in the Himalayan Hills. You are evidently unable to build up your body.

I suggest your giving up all activities including cow-keeping.

What about the buildings you have erected and the ground taken ? You can certainly come back to me and stay at will. Have no irons in the fire till your body is like true steel. I hold that it can be like that if the conditions are fulfilled.

I hope the examination of your heart will prove satisfactory.

I am fixed up here for the time being. Then the intention is to go to Noakhali. When that time will come I do not know.

This letter has taken me two hours to finish. There were many interruptions.

I had expressed the intention to pass my days in Pakistan, no promise.

Love,

Bapu

Shri Mira Behn,
Birla House,
New Delhi.

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[Between the last letter and the next, events passed as follows:

I had come to Delhi to get my heart examined. Within a few days I went down with an attack of malignant malaria in Birla House. Just then the Delhi riots flared up. Bapu was then in Calcutta, bringing peace to that distracted city by his presence right in the midst of the conflagration. As soon as he obtained assurance from the Calcutta populace that they would maintain peace, he came straight to Delhi and, from the moment of his arrival, the fury of the Delhi riots began to subside. Bapu had wanted to stay in the Bhangi Colony, but every nook and corner was filled with refugees. So at the request of Ministers and others he agreed to stay in Birla House. Thus after so long I found myself again with Bapu and for over three infinitely precious months I remained with him in Delhi. On the 18th of December, I bid farewell to Bapu and returned to my work near Rishikesh.]

Birla House,
New Delhi,
16-1-'48

चि. मीरां,

I got your letter yesterday. Evidently when you wrote it, you had no knowledge of this, my greatest fast.* Whether it will ultimately prove so or not is neither your concern nor mine. Our concern is the act itself not the result of the action. The fast commenced as usual with service, part of which was singing of "When I survey".† It was well sung by Sushila. There were some good friends at the service. The company was impromptu. No one was invited.

* "It will end when and if I am satisfied that there is a reunion of hearts of all the communities brought about without any outside pressure, and from an awakened sense of duty." From Bapu's statement of January 12, 1948.

† "When I survey the wondrous cross", Bapu's favourite hymn which I had sung to him regularly in the Aga Khan's Palace and also taught to Sushila.

I am dictating this immediately after the 3-30 a.m. prayer while I am taking my meal such as a fasting man with prescribed food can take. Don't be shocked. The food consists of 8 ozs. of hot water sipped with difficulty. You sip it as poison, well knowing that in result it is nectar. It revives me whenever I take it. Strange to say this time I am able to take about 8 meals of this poison-tasting, but nectar-like meal. Yet I claim to be fasting and credulous people accept it! What a strange world!

... ...

Your description....It is enough to make one despair of the cow, the mother of prosperity, receiving her due in a country accused of cow-worship. There is no Swaraj in such a land.

Your describing the Ashram as "Pashulok"* is a magnificent idea. It is poetic. Don't ever write Pashulok Ashram. Ashram — Pashulok, with a dash in between, is good. Though now that I am thinking over it a little more deeply, Pashulok Ashram perhaps better represents your idea. Since, however, it is your excellent idea, that is to be carried out, your choice is to be final.

... ...

Don't rush here because I am fasting. The *yagna*, as I have called it, demands that everyone, wherever he or she is, should perform his or her duty. If an appreciable number do this, I must survive the ordeal. Trust God and be where you are....†

---

* Bapu means the area served by the Ashram.

† This letter, after being typed, apparently got mislaid. When it was found some days later, it was hurriedly forwarded to me without its being placed before Bapu for signature.

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Postcard

New Delhi,
19-1-'48

चि. मीरां,

Your note. All anxiety is over. I hope you got my letter dictated during the fast. I was working topspeed. Your note for H.* will receive attention.

Love,

Bapu

* *Harijan.*

ચિ. મીરા,

૧૯-૧-૪૮
ન. દિ.

Your note. All anxiety is over. I hope you got my letter dictated during the fast. I was working top speed. Your Note for Ho will receive attention.

Love
Bapu

[On the 30th of January, at about 7-30 p.m. the news of the assassination was brought to me in Pashulok. I had come out on to the verandah. As I heard the words, I became motionless and gazing up into the sky saw the stars glittering above the forest trees. The only words which spoke in my heart were: "Bapu, Bapu so it has come!" And with that there came a sense of peace which surmounted even the blinding shock.

Below I give the article I wrote for the Press a few days later:]

THEY HAVE BECOME ONE

For me there were only two, God and Bapu. And now they have become one!

When I heard the news something deep, deep down within me opened — the door to the imprisoned soul — and Bapu's spirit entered there. From that moment a new sense of the eternal abides with me.

Though Bapu's beloved physical presence is no longer with us, yet his sacred spirit is even nearer. Sometimes Bapu had said to me, "When this body is no more there will not be separation, but I shall be nearer to you. The body is a hindrance." I listened in faith. Now I know, through experience, the divine truth of these words.

Did Bapu know what was coming? One evening in December, shortly before I left Delhi for Rishikesh, I said to him, "Bapu, in March, when the cow-sheds are built and the work is organized, is there just a possibility that you might find time to come for the opening ceremony and give your blessings to the poor suffering Indian cow?" "Don't think of my coming," Bapu replied — and then, as if half speaking to himself, he added, "What is the good of counting on a corpse?" The words were so terrible that I repeated them to nobody, but put them away silently in my heart, with a prayer to God. The fast came and went, and I hoped the meaning of the reference had passed with it.

But the reference was prophetic, and the prophecy has been fulfilled.

That fateful evening, as I sat upright and motionless in meditation, I felt a shudder of anguish passing round the whole world. Again the blood of an *avatar* had flowed for the salvation of mankind, and the earth moaned with the weight and horror of a deadly sin.

That sin is not of one man, it is the Sin which floods the whole world from age to age, and which nothing but the crucifixion of God's beloved can stem.

Now must we move heaven and earth to fulfil the task which Bapu has left us. Bapu lived and died for us all — every man, woman and child. He lived, working unceasingly, and died a martyr's death, that we might be turned from the evil path of hatred, greed, violence and untruth. If we are to atone for our sins, and serve Bapu's sacred cause, communalism in every form must go, and many other things as well. Black marketing, corruption, favouritism, jealousies, rivalries and a host of other dark manifestations of untruth and violence. These must be tackled with a firm will and unfaltering hand. Bapu was full of love and gentleness, but in his fight with evil he was relentless.

Bapu could fight the evil without because he had mastered the evil within — May God so purify us that we may become worthy of the mighty task before us.

Mira

THE END

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